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ABSTRACT

Exploratory in nature because of its small foreign-born sample, this working paper represents a first step in efforts by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (IFS) to examine the role of the family among the major immigrant groups in Australia. Comparisons are made between foreign-born and Australian-born families based on data collected in the 1981-1982 IFS survey concerning household structure, family background, marriage and fertility patterns, attitudes and decisions. Findings are complex. In some areas of family formation a number of foreign-born groups differed from the Australian-born; in other areas one foreign-born group contrasted not only with the Australian-born but also with the other foreign-born groups; in yet other areas there were strong similarities among all groups. After a discussion of methodology in chapter 1, chapters 2 and 3 describe the Australian Family Formation Project (AFF) survey data, the scope of the analysis, the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, and their household composition and family history. Chapters 4 to 9 present findings on family formation patterns, attitudes, and intentions. The report concludes with an assessment of the main findings of the analysis, the effectiveness of the AFF Project survey questionnaire, and recommendations for the structuring of future surveys. (RH)

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9 June 1985

WORKING PAPER

Family Formation and Ethnicity

A report using Australian Family Formation Project data prepared for the Institute of Family Studies by Siew-Ean Khoo

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Institute of Family Studies

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Australian Family Formation Project — 1981-82 IFS Survey
A longitudinal survey of Australians aged 18 to 34 years conducted by the Institute of Family Studies in 1981-82.
The Australian Family Formation Project team comprised D.E. Edgar, H. Glezer, C. Kilmartin, P. McDonald, A. Prolisko, D.E. Stewart, D. Storer and T. Tremayne

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The author

Dr Siew-Ean Khoo is a Research Fellow at the Development Studies Centre, Australian National University. At the time of writing this Working Paper she was a consultant with the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Her research interests include family demography and population and development issues.

Foreword

This Working Paper is based on data from the Institute's first-phase survey of the *Australian Family Formation Project*. The national sample of 18 to 34 year olds, designed to represent the Australian population, contained a wide cross-section of ethnic groups. Inevitably however, the numbers from individual countries were not high enough to allow detailed country by country comparisons; Siew-Ean Khoo has therefore grouped them into broader categories which share certain characteristics.

Despite her careful disclaimers and cautionary notes, such a grouping is clearly valid and useful. For differences do show up in the attitudes towards marriage and having children between Northern and Southern Europeans, Asians, those of English-speaking origin and the Australian-born. Such differences are important for us all to keep in mind when we make sweeping generalisations about 'migrants' or 'non-English speakers' and their family values.

Perhaps even more important though, are the similarities that emerge from this study. Contrary to 'common knowledge' and stereotype, even contrary to patterns in their countries of origin, South-East Asians and Southern Europeans do not want or have large families, do not necessarily marry young and do look for attributes in a marital partner similar to those sought by Australians and Western Europeans. Such findings remind us that the demographic and social forces affecting our lifestyles and life choices are, to an extent, global ones.

We need to understand those pressures if we are to plan appropriately for young Australians. Though a study of 'family formation' may not seem, at first glance, to be very practical or policy-relevant, it is central to all social planning. The *Australian Family Formation Project* was the first project designed by the newly established Institute in 1980, because the future of marriage and family life depends upon how the young regard these two most basic institutions. If the high divorce rate, unemployment, economic uncertainty, changing sex roles, pessimism about the future turn young people away from forming their own families, the whole structure of society, its very cultural fabric, will change. Child care, schooling, housing, homeless youth, infant welfare and health centres are only a few of the areas obviously affected by changes in family formation patterns.

Our first-phase survey, conducted in 1981-82, shows some of the effects we predicted of social and economic pressures on attitudes to marriage and fertility. It also showed how strongly affirmed the family still is in Australian society, with over 90 per cent of our 18 to 34 year old sample expecting to marry or actually being already married, agreeing that 'marriage is for life' and wanting at least some children.

This Working Paper, *Family formation and ethnicity*, gives a broad picture of these patterns for young Australians, in the context of the varied cultural values of our many ethnic groups. The Institute's *Annual Report* for 1982-83 describes many of the broader results, and more detailed papers are contained in the volumes of proceedings from both the 1983 Australian Family Research Conference and the 1984 XXth International CFR Seminar on 'Social Change and Family Policies', both published by and available from the Institute of Family Studies. We are soon to publish three other reports based on the *Australian Family Formation Project*: a study of de facto living by Siew-Ean Khoo, a study of marriage entry patterns by Gordon Carmichael and a study of the patterns of leaving home by Christabel Young.

The data from this major survey are available to the wider research fraternity via ACSPRI and the ANU Social Science Data Archives. It is Institute policy to have its larger data sets prepared for further analysis by others and there is a wealth of material for academics, students and government or independent researchers to use for their own purposes.

I should add that the Institute's other major contribution to the study of multiculturalism is soon to appear. This is a book called *Ethnic family values in Australia*, written by a distinguished collection of Australian experts and edited by Des Storer. The book analyses what is known about some fourteen different ethnic groups, their attitudes and social norms in relation to marriage, family, men, women, children, and divorce both here and in their countries of origin. Prentice-Hall Australia is the publisher.

Finally, I want to thank Siew-Ean Khoo for doing such a careful and succinct analysis of data which could never quite satisfy her demands. I trust this report will help enlighten the wider Australian public about the similarities and contrasts between their own lives and the many who have chosen to make their homes here.

Don Edgar
Director
Institute of Family Studies

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Introduction

In 1981, 22 per cent of the population in Australia were born overseas, compared with 10 per cent in 1947. The immigration of people since World War II, first from Eastern Europe, then from Northern and Southern Europe and the Middle East, and most recently from South-East Asia — in addition to the continuing immigration of people from the English-speaking countries — has made Australia 'a nation of migrants' (Drury, 1976, in Rowland, 1982).

The history of post-war immigration to Australia and its consequences for the ethnic composition of the population has been well documented (Price, 1982; Rowland, 1982). However, in spite of the importance of the family in the social structure, not much work has been done to understand the ideas and traditions migrants bring to Australia, especially in regard to family roles and family formation.

This Working Paper is a beginning in this direction. Although exploratory in nature because of its small overseas-born sample, it represents a first step in efforts by the Australian Institute of Family Studies to examine the role of the family among the major migrant groups in Australia.

As the first stage in its major Australian Family Formation Project (AFF Project),* the Institute of Family Studies undertook a nationwide survey of family formation in Australia which included questions on ethnicity. This Working Paper, *Family formation and ethnicity*, is a comparison of the foreign-born (grouped according to their region of origin) and the Australian-born, based on the data collected in that 1981-82 IFS Survey concerning household structure, family background, marriage and fertility patterns, attitudes and decisions.

The findings which emerge from this investigation are complex. In some areas of family formation a number of foreign-born groups differed from the Australian-born; in other areas one foreign-born group contrasted not only with the Australian-born but also with the other foreign-born groups; in yet other areas there were strong similarities between all groups.

For example, several foreign-born groups still held to the social and religious values of the old country in the new, and these values continued to influence their attitudes to marriage and child bearing. The Southern European, Middle Eastern and South-East Asian groups were more traditional in their views of sex outside marriage, sex roles and the centrality of the family. People in these groups often had partners from the same ethnic background.

* For details of the Institute's Australian Family Formation Project (AFF Project) see page 70 of this Working Paper.

But with regard to age at marriage and concepts of marriage, one group — that from the Southern European/Middle Eastern region — contrasted with all other foreign-born groups as well as with the Australian-born. This group was unambiguously positive about marriage and child bearing; the family was seen as the main source of pleasure and emotional support. Southern European and Middle Eastern women married earlier than the women in all other groups and their marriages appeared more stable.

Yet all groups (English-speaking and non-English-speaking foreign-born and Australian-born) agreed on important aspects of family life. All wanted small families. All believed that the partners to a marriage should share the same goals and values.

The first part of this report (Chapters 2 and 3) describes the AFF Project survey data, the scope of the analysis, the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and their household composition and family history. In the second part (Chapters 4 to 9), the findings on family formation patterns, attitudes and intentions are presented. The report concludes with an assessment of the main findings of the analysis, the effectiveness of the AFF Project survey questionnaire and with recommendations for the structuring of future surveys.

1 Methodology

Data for this Working Paper come from the Australian Family Formation Project's Australia-wide 1981-82 IFS Survey conducted by the Institute of Family Studies between October 1981 and February 1982 to examine family formation patterns of men and women then aged 18 to 34 years. The survey questionnaire covered such areas as family background, education, occupation, history of personal relationships, and attitudes and intentions regarding marriage and family formation.

Respondents in the AFF Project survey were selected using a probability sample design and came from randomly chosen households in 650 Collectors' Districts (CD) scattered throughout Australia. A skip interval of three occupied dwellings was adopted using random starting points within each CD. Approximately 15 households were contacted in each CD to yield four completed interviews. Whoever answered the door at each house call was asked first for details about the people living there and their relationship to one another. Then, in households where there was at least one person aged between 18 and 34 years, a detailed interview was obtained with one, randomly selected, person in that age range. A total of 2544 interviews was obtained from 1118 men and 1426 women.

Scope of the analysis

The primary objective of this report is to examine the data collected in the AFF Project survey for any important differences between the various ethnic groups concerning family formation plans and patterns and attitudes to marriage and the family. The report is an exploratory work; it cannot examine specific issues in depth because the AFF Project survey was designed to cover a broad range of topics.

The report takes a broad and simple definition of ethnicity. Ethnicity is defined by birthplace only. Consequently, the emphasis throughout is on a comparison of the foreign-born respondents of different ethnic origins with each other and with the Australian-born respondents. Because of sample size limitations, the foreign-born have been grouped according to the region rather than the specific country from which they came.

Distribution of the sample

Of the 2544 men and women interviewed in the AFF Project survey, 565 (22.3 per cent) were foreign-born. The distribution of the survey respondents by birthplace and sex is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Distribution of respondents in the AFF Project — 1981-82 IFS Survey according to birthplace categories

Birthplace	*Males*	*Females*	*Total*	
			Number	*Per cent*
(1) Australia	857	1 122	1 979	77.8
(2) New Zealand	28	23	51	2.0
(3) Pacific Islands	5	7	12	0.5
(4) United Kingdom, Ireland	95	120	215	8.4
(5) Germany	10	14	24	0.9
(6) Netherlands	7	7	14	0.6
(7) Other Western Europe	7	3	10	0.4
(8) Greece	10	10	20	0.8
(9) Italy	16	23	39	1.5
(10) Yugoslavia	11	7	18	0.7
(11) Other Southern Europe	13	7	20	0.8
(12) Eastern Europe	8	5	13	0.5
(13) Middle East	14	13	27	1.1
(14) Africa	5	14	19	0.7
(15) South Asia	7	7	14	0.6
(16) South-East Asia, China	18	29	47	1.8
(17) USA, Canada	4	9	13	0.5
(18) South America	3	6	9	0.4
Total	1 118	1 426	2 544	100.0

The number of migrants from countries other than Britain and Ireland was small. Since the research required an examination of men and women separately and at times needed to control for such characteristics as age and marital status, a regrouping of the foreign-born was necessary to maintain adequate numbers of cases for analysis. The foreign-born were identified by region of origin rather than country of birth, a region being comprised of people with similar ethnic backgrounds.

Respondents from the English-speaking countries (United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand, United States and Canada) were grouped together. Although there were linguistic and cultural differences between Western and Eastern Europeans, their small numbers also made it necessary to put them in one category. The third group, a 'Mediterranean' bloc, consisted of all those from the Southern European and Middle Eastern countries. Men and women from South-East Asia and China formed a fourth group which included two sub-groups — migrants and Indo-Chinese refugees. The last group comprised all the other foreign-born, a residual category consisting of the few persons born in Africa, South America, South Asia and the Pacific Islands. The distribution of the sample according to these new categories is shown in Table 2.

The construction of the survey sample to make it representative of the Australian population in terms of its sex ratio, marital status distribution and labour force participation rates resulted in some distortion of the numbers in the smaller ethnic groups. Therefore, it was decided that the unweighted sample would be used. Consequently, the findings reflect the respondents' rather than the Australian population's views and behaviour.

The small sample size of migrants meant that only tabulations by one or two characteristics other than region of origin and sex were possible. Statistical or demographic methods that

Table 2 Distribution of respondents in the AFF Project — 1981-82 IFS Survey according to revised birthplace categories

Birthplace	*Males*	*Females*	*Total*	
			Number	*Per cent*
Australia (1)	857	1 122	1 979	77.8
Other English-speaking countries (2, 4, 17)	127	152	279	11.0
Western and Eastern Europe (5, 6, 7, 12)	32	29	61	2.4
Southern Europe, Middle East (8, 9, 10, 11, 13)	64	60	124	4.9
South-East Asia, China (16)	18	29	47	1.8
Elsewhere (3, 14, 15, 18)	20	34	54	2.1
Total	1 118	1 426	2 544	100.0

Note: The numbers in parentheses refer to the birthplace numbers in Table 1.

required a reasonably large sample size for stable and significant results could not be used unless the sample was classified into even broader ethnic categories, for example, persons of English-speaking origin, Europeans and Asians.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the analyses and findings that follow provide an insight into the attitudes and the family formation plans and patterns of the very diverse ethnic groups that now comprise the population of Australia.

2 Characteristics of the Respondents

To establish the backgrounds of the different ethnic groups against which their family formation patterns and attitudes could be considered, and to set up a number of the possible variables which could affect these patterns and attitudes, the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents were examined. Levels of education, rates of workforce participation and unemployment, occupation and the distribution of family income were looked at in order to establish a profile of the socio-economic status of the different groups.

Age

The respondents were all aged between 18 and 34 years old. More women than men in the sample fell within the 28-34 age group. More than half of all the foreign-born women were in this oldest age group compared with 43 per cent of Australian-born women. One-half of the male respondents from Europe were also in this oldest age group, compared with one-third of the Australian-born males. Males who were born 'elsewhere' were comparatively younger. (See Tables 3 and 3a.)

The age distributions of the male respondents in the different birthplace groups bear out the census findings. According to the 1981 Census, the proportions of males born in other English-speaking countries and Europe were higher in the age groups 25-29 and 30-34 than in the age group 20-24 (Table 4). The age distribution of the Australian-born female respondents differs somewhat from that indicated in the census which shows a higher proportion in the younger age groups. Women over age 25 were slightly oversampled in the survey mainly because they were more likely to be at home minding young children and therefore available for the interview.

Marital status

More than half of the Australian-born males but only one-third of those born in Southern Europe and the Middle East were still single at the time of the survey. This difference results partly from the older age distribution of the Southern European/Middle Eastern men in the sample. About 45 per cent of Western and Eastern European males and two-thirds of the South-East Asian males were still single (Table 3).

Since women generally married at younger ages than men, a smaller proportion of the female respondents was still single. Only one-quarter of those born in the English-speaking countries and in Western and Eastern Europe were single, but one-third of the Australian-born and other foreign-born women were still single (Table 3a).

Table 3 Demographic characteristics of male sample

Characteristics	Birthplace					
	Australia	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Age (years)						
18-22	37%	32%	25%	20%	28%	40%
23-27	30	29	25	23	39	45
28-34	33	39	50	56	33	15
Marital status						
Single	52	42	44	33	67	70
Married	39	45	44	64	28	25
De facto	7	9	9	2	0	0
Separated	1	2	0	2	6	5
Divorced	2	2	3	0	0	0
Widowed	0	0	0	0	0	0
Locality						
Metropolitan	68	84	81	84	100	85
Non-metropolitan	32	17	19	16	0	15
State						
NSW	38	30	28	45	39	60
Vic	24	17	28	39	22	20
Qld	14	12	13	3	0	5
SA	10	13	22	6	0	10
WA	10	21	6	5	33	5
Tas	3	1	3	0	0	0
NT	0	1	0	0	0	0
ACT	3	5	0	2	6	0
Number	857	127	32	64	18	20

The group born in Southern Europe and the Middle East had the highest proportion of married males — nearly two-thirds. Very few men in this group were in de facto relationships or separated (less than 2 per cent in each category), and none were divorced. By comparison, 7 per cent of the Australian-born men and 9 per cent of those born in the other English-speaking countries and Western and Eastern Europe were in de facto unions, and 2-4 per cent were separated or divorced. A similar marital status distribution is observed for the women in these groups. None of the respondents born in South-East Asia were in de facto unions, although about 6 per cent were separated or divorced. (See Tables 3 and 3a.)

Location

Most of the foreign-born lived in metropolitan areas compared with about two-thirds of the Australian-born respondents. People from different regions appeared to favour different States. Those from English-speaking countries were found disproportionately in Western Australia, and Western and Eastern European males were overrepresented in South Australia compared with the Australian-born respondents. About 80 per cent of the respondents from Southern Europe and the Middle East were in New South Wales and Victoria, mainly in the

Table 3a Demographic characteristics of female sample

	Birthplace					
Characteristics	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Age (years)						
18-22	32%	22%	21%	25%	14%	21%
23-27	25	26	17	18	28	32
28-34	43	51	62	57	59	47
Marital status						
Single	35	25	24	33	31	21
Married	53	59	69	63	62	71
De facto	4	7	0	2	0	9
Separated	3	3	3	2	3	0
Divorced	4	5	3	0	3	0
Widowed	0	1	0	0	0	0
Locality						
Metropolitan	67	75	76	87	86	91
Non-metropolitan	33	25	24	13	14	9
State						
NSW	35	35	38	50	48	41
Vic	23	20	28	25	17	21
Qld	16	12	7	5	14	9
SA	11	12	8	8	7	6
WA	9	17	14	12	10	21
Tas	3	2	7	0	0	0
NT	1	1	0	0	0	0
ACT	3	2	0	0	3	3
Number	1 122	152	29	60	29	34

Table 4 Distribution of population aged 20-34 according to age group and sex

	Birthplace					
Age group	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Males						
20-24 years	37%	30%	16%	23%	35%	29%
25-29	33	31	28	31	32	33
30-34	30	39	56	46	32	39
Females						
20-24 years	37	31	16	23	29	29
25-29	33	31	28	32	35	35
30-34	30	38	55	44	36	37

Source: 1981 Census.

Sydney and Melbourne metropolitan areas. Those from South-East Asia were somewhat more dispersed among the States (Tables 3 and 3a).

Education

Distribution across the different educational levels was much the same for the Australian-born and the respondents from the other English-speaking countries and Europe, excluding Southern Europe. Those from Southern Europe and the Middle East had a slightly lower level of education on average. More than half of the male respondents from this region and nearly two-thirds of the female respondents had less than 11 years of schooling. Respondents from South-East Asia were more highly educated; 44 per cent of males and 31 per cent of females had some tertiary education (Tables 5 and 5a).

Table 5 Socio-economic characteristics of male sample

	Birthplace					
Characteristics	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Education						
< 11 years	44%	47%	41%	53%	39%	45%
11-12 years	30	28	28	19	17	30
Tertiary	27	25	31	28	44	25
Activity						
Working	87	83	84	83	61	85
Studying	5	10	6	8	22	0
Home duties	0	0	0	0	6	0
Unemployed	6	7	9	8	6	15
Other	0	0	0	2	6	0
Family income						
Not stated	4	9	6	4	6	0
< $4 000	10	12	9	8	33	20
$4 001-$10 000	20	17	13	22	28	20
$10 001-$18 000	32	27	38	39	11	35
$18 001-$30 000	25	26	34	22	22	20
> $30 001	9	9	0	5	0	5
Religion						
Catholic	26	11	31	58	22	45
Other Christian	52	56	38	30	33	45
Muslim	0	0	0	6	6	0
Other	1	2	0	0	17	0
No religion	22	32	31	6	22	10
Religious practice						
Practising	46	39	44	73	61	80
Not practising	54	61	53	27	39	20
Number	857	127	32	64	18	20

Table 5a Socio-economic characteristics of female sample

	Birthplace					
Characteristics	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Education						
< 11 years	49%	50%	52%	62%	31%	29%
11-12 years	24	23	28	20	38	29
Tertiary	27	27	21	18	31	41
Activity						
Working full time	36	32	35	32	41	65
Working part time	18	20	21	12	7	3
Studying	5	3	0	5	10	3
Home duties	37	43	41	42	41	27
Unemployed	4	2	3	10	0	3
Family income						
Not stated	10	9	3	4	14	6
< $4 000	10	11	7	12	7	3
$4 001-$10 000	16	11	10	25	21	12
$10 001-$18 000	32	27	38	37	24	32
$18 001-$30 000	24	32	21	17	28	35
> $30 001	8	10	21	6	7	12
Religion						
Catholic	27	17	48	63	21	62
Other Christian	60	65	24	25	31	27
Muslim	0	0	0	5	0	3
Other	1	1	0	0	21	3
No religion	12	17	28	7	28	6
Religious practice						
Practising	56	45	52	85	55	77
Not practising	44	55	48	15	45	24
Number	1 122	152	29	60	29	34

Among the respondents aged 18 to 22, 43 per cent of the Australian-born males and 28 per cent of the females were full-time or part-time students. Compared with the Australian-born, a higher proportion of males but a lower proportion of females from the other English-speaking countries and Western and Eastern Europe were studying. The proportion of students among male and female Southern European/Middle Eastern respondents was about the same: 11 out of the 26 respondents were enrolled in full-time or part-time study. Two-thirds of the nine South-East Asian-born respondents in this age group were students, the highest proportion found for the six birthplace groups being compared, although the number of cases was the smallest (Table 6).

An examination of the questionnaires of the 12 South-East Asian-born respondents aged 18 to 34 years who were full-time or part-time students showed that three of them (two males and one female) were foreign students who shared a house with a group of people and

Table 6 Respondents aged 18-22 studying full or part time

	Males		*Females*	
Birthplace	*% Studying*	*Number 18-22 yrs*	*% Studying*	*Number 18-22 yrs*
Australia	43	318	28	364
Other English-speaking countries	48	40	15	34
Western and Eastern Europe	75	8	17	6
Southern Europe, Middle East	39	13	47	13
South-East Asia, China	60	5	75	4
Elsewhere	13	8	29	7

whose parents had never been in Australia, and two were male Caucasians born in South-East Asia of Australian parents. The other seven appeared to be permanent migrants. Although it would have been preferable to exclude the Caucasians from the South-East Asian category, two should not affect the group pattern very much except where the number of cases is small.

Work status

Of the men, the Australian-born had the highest proportion working (87 per cent) and the lowest proportion studying (5 per cent); the South-East Asians had the lowest proportion working (61 per cent) and the highest proportion of students (22 per cent). The labour force participation rates of the male respondents were between 90 and 94 per cent for all birthplace categories except South-East Asia which had a rate of 67 per cent. The unemployment rate was lowest among the Australian-born respondents (6.5 per cent) while males in the 'elsewhere' category and those from Europe had comparatively high unemployment rates of 10 to 15 per cent (Table 7).

Table 7 Work status of respondents

	Birthplace					
	Australia	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Males						
In labour force	94%	90%	94%	91%	67%	100%
Of those in labour force						
employed	94	92	90	91	92	85
unemployed	7	8	10	9	8	15
Females						
In labour force	58	54	59	53	48	71
Of those in labour force						
full-time employed	61	60	59	59	86	92
part-time employed	31	37	35	20	14	4
unemployed	8	4	6	19	0	4

About 40 per cent of women in all the birthplace groups except the 'elsewhere' category were involved in home duties; only 27 per cent of women in the 'elsewhere' group were homemakers. Women from this category had the highest labour force participation rate (71 per cent) and those from South-East Asia had the lowest (48 per cent). Ten per cent of the South-East Asian women were students compared with 5 per cent or less of the other women (Table 5a).

Of the women who were in the labour force, about 90 per cent of those from South-East Asia and 'elsewhere' worked full time while only about 60 per cent of the Australian-born and those from the other English-speaking countries and Europe, excluding Southern Europe, were full-time workers. The unemployment rate was low for foreign-born women (4-6 per cent), with the exception of those from Southern Europe and the Middle East (19 per cent). Among the Australian-born women, the unemployment rate was 7.5 per cent (Table 7).

Among working male respondents, one-quarter of those born in Australia and the other English-speaking countries were in professional or managerial occupations compared with 9 per cent of those from Southern Europe, the Middle East and South-East Asia. A higher proportion of the foreign-born men worked as tradesmen and labourers, or as clerical and sales personnel (Table 8).

Similar differences in occupational distribution were observed among working women. There was little difference between Australian-born women and women from the other English-speaking countries in their occupational distribution. A disproportionate number of women from European countries were service workers. Many women from Southern Europe, the Middle East and South-East Asia were employed in blue collar occupations (Table 8).

Table 8 Occupational distribution of employed respondents

	Birthplace					
	Australia	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Males						
Professional/Admin	24%	26%	15%	9%	9%	12%
Clerical, sales	16	11	22	26	18	35
Farmers, miners	4	3	0	2	0	0
Tradesmen, etc	49	51	55	55	64	47
Service workers	8	10	8	8	9	6
Females						
Professional/admin	27	28	19	15	0	40
Clerical, sales	49	42	44	39	36	39
Tradeswomen, etc	9	9	6	27	50	17
Service workers	16	22	31	19	14	4
Number employed						
Males	749	105	27	53	11	17
Females	604	79	16	26	14	23

Family income

There was not much difference between respondents born in Australia and the other English-speaking countries with regard to family income distribution. Respondents from Southern Europe and the Middle East had relatively lower family incomes than the other groups. Males from South-East Asia also reported relatively low family incomes, but this was not the case with the female respondents whose family income distribution was comparable to that of the Australian-born women (Tables 5 and 5a). It is difficult to say how reliable income reporting is without a proper evaluation of the data and comparison with income data from other sources.

Religion

About 27 per cent of the Australian-born respondents were Catholics, more than half were other types of Christians and 21 per cent of the males and 12 per cent of the females reported that they belonged to no religion. The proportion of Catholics was highest for the Southern European/Middle Eastern group and lowest for the other English-speaking countries. There were only nine Muslims among the respondents; seven from the Middle East, one from South-East Asia and one from South Asia. The percentage of foreign-born who reported no religion ranged between 24 and 30 per cent with the exception of those in the Southern European/Middle Eastern and 'elsewhere' categories; this compared with 16 per cent of the Australian-born respondents (Tables 5 and 5a).

A measure of religious practice was derived from the question about attendance at religious services. Those who indicated that they attended three or more services a year were considered to be practising their religion, those who attended fewer than three services were considered to be not practising a religion. About 50 per cent of the Australian-born respondents could be classified as practising a religion. The groups with the highest proportions of practising respondents were Southern Europe and the Middle East and 'elsewhere' (about 80 per cent) where the proportions of Catholics were relatively high. Less than half of the respondents from English-speaking countries were practising a religion (Tables 5 and 5a).

Summary

In general, the characteristics of the respondents in each birthplace category confirmed expectations formulated on the basis of other data such as the Census. For example, the Southern European and Middle Eastern respondents were mainly Catholics, had a lower level of education than the Australian-born and were often unskilled workers. They were also distinguished by a high rate of marriage and low rate of divorce or separation. The South-East Asians, too, differed from the other groups in certain areas: they had the highest proportion of students and the highest level of education. Persons born in the other English-speaking countries shared more characteristics with the Australian-born than with persons born in non-English-speaking regions.

3 Family Background

To complete the analysis of the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents which might have a bearing on their family behaviour and attitudes, their present living arrangements and families of origin were examined. Of particular interest were the types and sizes of the households in which the respondents were living at the time of interview: although these living arrangements probably reflect a variety of influences, they may also be related to the respondents' attitudes to their families of origin and to the families they establish or hope to establish themselves which are analysed later in this report.

Also examined were the characteristics of the respondents' families of origin — whether the respondents' parents had also migrated to Australia, the size of the families they had established, their past and present work situation and their marital status. Clearly, factors such as the values the respondents' parents posited in the family, the positive or negative aspects of family life which the respondents experienced, and the sizes and types of families of origin need to be taken into account in any investigation of the factors influencing the family behaviour and attitudes of respondents.

Household size and composition

About half of the sample of men and women lived in households with two to three other persons, a quarter lived alone or with one person, and another quarter lived with four or more other people. Various birthplace groups deviated from this general pattern. The Southern European and Middle Eastern respondents lived in larger households: 32 per cent lived in households comprising five or more people including themselves and only 14.5 per cent lived in households of one to two people. Respondents from the Western and Eastern European countries showed the opposite pattern: 34 per cent lived in households of one to two people. Nearly 60 per cent of the respondents from South-East Asia lived in households of three to four people; of the remaining 40 per cent, half lived in households comprising one to two people, and half in households of five or more persons (Table 9).

The 'typical' nuclear family of a married couple and children was more prevalent among the foreign-born than among the Australian-born. This is because a greater proportion of the foreign-born respondents were married. Also, the respondents from Southern Europe and the Middle East who had never married were more likely to be still living with their parents at home (see Chapter 4). Thirty-five per cent of the Australian-born respondents were in nuclear families compared with 47 per cent of the respondents from Southern Europe and the Middle East, and 43 per cent of those from Western and Eastern Europe and the other

Table 9 Distribution of respondents according to household size

Birthplace	Number of persons in household			Number of respondents
	1-2	3-4	5 or more	
Australia	26%	51%	23%	1 979
Other English-speaking countries	28	50	22	279
Western and Eastern Europe,	34	44	21	61
Southern Europe, Middle East	15	54	32	124
South-East Asia, China	19	60	21	47
Elsewhere	37	44	19	54

English-speaking countries. The proportion of respondents who lived with their marriage partner only was lowest for the South-East Asian and Southern European/Middle Eastern groups, an indication of the older age and possibly earlier child bearing patterns of these respondents (Table 10).

Three-generation households (comprising a married couple, their parents and children) were also more prevalent among respondents from Southern Europe, the Middle East, South-East Asia and the 'elsewhere' category (2-3 per cent), and least prevalent among the Australian-born and those from English-speaking countries (less than 1 per cent). Young married couples from Southern Europe and the Middle East still without children were also more likely to be living with their parents either in their own or their parents' home (Table 10).

Table 10 Distribution of respondents according to household structure

Household type	Birthplace					
	Australia	Other English-speaking countries	Western and Eastern Europe	Southern Europe, Middle East	South-East Asia, China	Elsewhere
Married couple families						
Couple only	15%	15%	13%	11%	6%	24%
Couple and children	35	43	43	47	40	33
Couple and parents	0	1	0	2	0	0
Couple and others	1	2	2	1	0	0
Couple, children, parents	1	0	2	3	2	4
Couple, children, others	1	0	2	2	0	0
Other families						
Self only	5	7	12	2	6	4
Self and children	4	4	3	1	2	2
Self and parents	30	20	13	31	15	20
Self, children, parents	1	1	2	0	0	0
Self, children, others	1	0	0	0	0	0
Self and relatives	2	1	3	1	9	6
Self and others	6	5	7	1	19	7
Number of persons	1 979	279	61	124	47	54

Respondents born in Australia, the other English-speaking countries and Europe were more likely to live alone, or with children or with people unrelated to themselves. Few of the Southern European/Middle Eastern respondents lived alone, and because their incidence of separation or divorce was low (see Chapter 6), very few lived in single-parent households. A comparatively high proportion of the respondents from South-East Asia lived alone or with people not related to themselves. This reflects the number of tertiary students in this group, which also had the highest proportion living in flats.

Family history

Since we would not expect male and female respondents to have different family backgrounds, the tabulations for this aspect were not made separately for each sex. The combination of both sexes allows separate tabulations to be made for Greek, Italian, Yugoslav and Middle Eastern respondents.

Clearly it is significant in any consideration of the influence of tradition to establish whether respondents emigrated, or were reunited in Australia, with their families of origin: that is, to establish if they had the possibilities of continuing to live with and be influenced by their families of origin. Moreover, the fact that a family migrates together should be an indicator of the strength of the family bond.

The Italian-born respondents formed the group with the highest proportion of parents settled in Australia (97 per cent), and the South-East Asians formed the group with the lowest (43 per cent). Other groups whose parents were less likely to have settled in this country were the Greeks (50 per cent had parents here), those from 'elsewhere' (57 per cent) and the Middle Eastern respondents (59 per cent). (See Table 11.)

The particular age of respondents when they arrived in Australia may be a moderating factor in a study of this kind. It is important to establish whether primary socialisation of the foreign-born took place in Australia or in the country of origin. Respondents were therefore asked whether they had immigrated to Australia before or after the age of fifteen.

Among the foreign-born, 87 per cent of the Italian respondents came to Australia before the age of 15 compared with 52 per cent of the respondents from the English-speaking countries and 41 per cent of those from the Middle East. Three-quarters of the South-East Asian respondents came after age 15; many would have come either as refugees or tertiary students (Table 12). It appears from this information that most Italian-born respondents came to Australia as young children with their migrant parents. Other groups were more likely to come on their own as primary migrants. This is particularly so of respondents from South-East Asia.

Most of the respondents from the Southern European countries came from working class families. The fathers of 90 per cent of the Greek-born respondents, and of 84 per cent of those born in the other Southern European countries, were unskilled workers. This compares with the fathers of about 60 per cent of the Australian and other English-speaking respondents, and the fathers of 44 and 49 per cent of those born in the Middle East and South-East Asia respectively (Table 13).

The proportion of respondents with mothers in the workforce while they were growing up was highest for the Greek group (70 per cent) and lowest for the Middle Eastern and South-East Asian groups (26 per cent). About half of the respondents born in Australia and the other English-speaking countries had a working mother while they were growing up.

Table 11 Respondents according to parents' characteristics

Parents' characteristics	*Birthplace*									
	Australia	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Greece*	*Italy*	*Yugoslavia*	*Southern Europe*	*Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Came to Australia	—	62%	85%	50%	97%	78%	70%	59%	43%	57%
Divorced	5%	9	13	0	0	0	0	0	2*	4*
Separated	5	5	10	0	0	6*	0	0	9*	0
Present age										
Father:										
Under 55	36	38	33	15*	33	50	30	41	34	39
55-64	31	33	43	45	31	28	45	22	30	32
65 and over	13	12	20	15*	26	11*	5*	22	11	11
Dead	15	12	3*	20*	10*	11*	15*	11*	23	13
Don't know	4	4	2*	5*	0	0	5*	4*	2*	6*
Mother:										
Under 55	51	54	46	40	46	61	60	52	51	59
55-64	30	27	36	30	41	22*	15*	33	23	22
65 and over	8	10	10	5*	10*	11*	15*	7*	9*	7*
Dead	7	7	7*	20*	3*	6*	5*	4*	9*	7*
Don't know	4	3	2*	5*	0	0	5*	4*	9*	4*
Number of persons	1 979	279	61	20	39	18	20	27	47	54

Note: * = less than five cases.

Table 13 Respondents according to parents' work status

Parents' work status	*Birthplace*									
	Australia	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Greece*	*Italy*	*Yugoslavia*	*Southern Europe*	*Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Father:										
Unskilled worker	59%	60%	71%	91%	87%	89%	75%	44%	49%	54%
Semi-skilled worker	37	37	23	11*	5 *	11*	20*	56	49	46
Mother:										
Worked while respondent growing up	45	55	53	70	49	50	40	26	26	33
Unskilled worker	43	44	59	79	79	56	63	57	33	28
Present situation										
Father:										
Wage earner	43	50	46	35	18	67	45	30	49	37
Employer	15	12	12	20*	23*	6*	5*	30	9*	22
Unemployed	1	2	10	0	3*	0	0	11*	0	4*
Invalid	3	1*	0	0	15	11*	10*	0	0	0
Retired	21	19	21	25	31	6*	20*	19	19	24
Dead	15	12	3*	20*	10*	11*	15*	11*	23	13
Don't know	2	4	8	0	0	0	5*	0	0	0
Mother:										
Wage earner	24	35	25	15*	8*	33	20*	11*	11	35
Employer	4	4	3*	0	8*	6*	0	7*	6*	2*
Unemployed	1	1*	0	0	0	0	0	4*	2*	0
Home duties	51	40	56	40	64	50	55	56	57	37
Invalid	1	1*	2*	0	0	0	0	0	2*	2*
Retired	11	10	8	25	18	0	15*	19	13	15
Dead	7	7	7*	20*	3*	6*	5*	4*	9*	7*
Don't know	1	2*	0	0	0	6*	5*	0	0	2*
Number of persons	1 979	279	61	20	39	18	20	27	47	54

Note: * = less than five cases.

Table 12 Foreign-born who came to Australia before age 15

Birthplace	*Percentage*	*Total number of respondents*
English-speaking countries	52	279
Western and Eastern Europe	77	61
Greece	40	20
Italy	87	39
Yugoslavia	56	18
Other Southern European	65	20
Middle East	41	27
South-East Asia, China	26	47
Elsewhere	39	54

Nearly 80 per cent of the working mothers of Greek and Italian respondents were unskilled workers compared with 44 per cent of the working mothers of the Australian-born and other English-speaking respondents (Table 14).

None of the Southern European and Middle Eastern respondents' parents were separated or divorced; one out of ten of the Australian-born respondents' parents and 14 per cent of the other English-speaking respondents' parents were. The Western and Eastern Europeans had the highest proportion of parents divorced or separated: 13 per cent of the parents were divorced and 10 per cent were separated. Nine per cent of the parents of the South-East Asian respondents were also separated; however, the Indo-Chinese parents who had been separated because of political conflict might account for this percentage. A higher proportion of the respondents from this last category and from Greece mentioned that they no longer had living parents (Table 11).

Many respondents from the Middle East and South-East Asia came from large families: about half were from families of five or more children. The Yugoslav respondents came from smaller families: only 11 per cent reported having five or more siblings and 16 per cent reported no siblings at all. Most of the English-speaking and Australian-born respondents were from families of one to four children (Table 14).

Following this review of the relevant demographic and socio-economic characteristics and family background of the survey sample, we turn now to the major findings about respondents' family formation plans, patterns and attitudes.

Table 14 Distribution of respondents according to their number of siblings

Birthplace	*Number of siblings*				*No. of persons*
	0	*1-2*	*3-4*	*5 or more*	
Australia	3%	47%	32%	18%	1 979
Other English-speaking countries	3	51	31	15	279
Western and Eastern Europe	8	46	38	8	61
Greece	10	35	30	25	20
Italy	5	41	33	21	39
Yugoslavia	16	44	28	11	18
Other Southern European	15	30	30	25	20
Middle East	0	11	30	59	27
South-East Asia, China	2	19	30	49	47
Elsewhere	2	39	30	30	54
All	4	46	32	19	2 544

4 Leaving Home

Because not everyone interviewed had left home, a comparison of the ages at which the respondents in the different groups left would be biased towards those people who had done so early. Using life table methods would avoid this bias but would require a much larger sample of each ethnic group. It was decided, therefore, that a simple measure, the proportion of respondents who had left home at age 18 or earlier in each birthplace group, would provide an adequate basis for comparison. Eighteen years is chosen as the dividing point since the respondents were all aged 18 or older. It is also the age usually associated with the beginning of adulthood, and leaving the parental home is in many ways an event signalling this transition. Leaving home is considered as a life cycle stage and those respondents who had to leave home at an early age (arbitrarily set at less than ten years old) for other reasons have been excluded from this part of the analysis.

Proportion leaving at age 18 or earlier

About one-third of the Australian-born men had left home before they were nineteen. The proportion of men leaving home by that age was highest for the other English-speaking countries (46 per cent) and lowest for the Southern European/Middle Eastern group (14 per cent).

Women in all ethnic groups tended to leave home at an earlier age than men. The Southern European and Middle Eastern women left home later than women in the other groups. About half of the women from the other English-speaking counties, Western and Eastern Europe and South-East Asia had left home at age 18 or earlier compared with 20 per cent of the Southern European/Middle Eastern women (Table 15).

Those foreign-born who came to Australia after age 15 had left home earlier than those who came before the age of fifteen. Some of them, of course, probably left home to come to Australia.

An analysis of the Australian-born respondents according to their parents' place of origin, showed that those with both parents born in non-English-speaking countries were more likely to leave home later than those who had English-speaking parents. This pattern was observed for both men and women (Table 15a).

Controlling for level of education or religious practice does not on the whole alter the pattern of leaving home for each birthplace group. The Southern Europeans were still less likely to leave home at age 18 or earlier than the other groups with the same level of education or religious commitment (Table 16). However, in almost all categories, and

Table 15 Respondents who left home at age 18 or earlier, according to whether they came to Australia after age 15

	All respondents		*Total number*		*Came after age 15*		*Total number*	
Birthplace	*Males*	*Females*	*Males*	*Females*	*Males*	*Females*	*Males*	*Females*
Australia	32%	44%	851	1 115	—	—	—	—
Other English-speaking countries	46	51	125	152	59%	58%	58	78
Western and Eastern Europe	28	48	32	29	36	50	11	6
Southern Europe, Middle East	14	20	64	60	25	40	28	20
South-East Asia, China	33	52	18	29	31	35	13	20
Elsewhere	30	27	20	30	20	26	10	23

Table 15a Australian-born respondents who had left home by age 18 according to parents' birthplace

			Total number	
Parents' birthplace	*Males*	*Females*	*M*	*F*
Australia	34%	43%	669	877
Both parents from English-speaking countries	27	52	81	106
One parent from non-English-speaking countries	31	46	26	39
Both parents from non-English-speaking countries	16	34	75	93

especially among the women, those who were not practising a religion left home at an earlier age than those who were practising a religion.

Level of education does not have a consistent effect on leaving home for all the birthplace groups. Among the Australian-born, the proportion leaving home by age 19 decreased with level of education, probably because those who continued their education beyond the minimum school leaving age were more likely to stay at home than those who left school early to get a job or to get married. A similar pattern was observed, although to a lesser extent, for some of the other birthplace groups. However, 50 per cent of the South-East Asian males with tertiary education left home at age 18 or earlier compared with 14 per cent of those with less than 11 years of schooling. Many probably left home to come to Australia to study at university or to matriculate for university entry. However, this result should be viewed with some caution since the number of cases was very small.

Reasons for leaving home

Marked differences were often observed, both between the groups and between men and women within the groups, regarding reasons for leaving home.

Independence, marriage and jobs accounted equally for about 60 per cent of Australian-born males leaving home. Of the Australian-born women, 38 per cent had left home to get married; other common reasons given were the need for independence, study, work, or conflict at home, each being mentioned by about 10 per cent as the main reasons for leaving

Table 16 Respondents who left home at age 18 or earlier according to education and religious practice

	Birthplace					
Characteristic	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Males						
Education						
< 11 years	38%	53%	31%	15%	14%	33%
11-12 years	26	37	33	17	33	33
Tertiary	28	45	20	11	50	20
Religious practice						
Practising	25	44	21	13	18	25
Not practising	37	48	35	18	57	50
Females						
Education						
< 11 years	51	59	40	24	67	0
11-12 years	40	29	50	25	46	20
Tertiary	34	56	67	0	44	46
Religious practice						
Practising	37	38	40	18	56	26
Not practising	52	63	57	33	46	29

home. Men and women from the other English-speaking countries and Europe, excluding Southern Europe, differed only slightly from the Australian-born in their reasons for leaving home. Fewer of the English-speaking respondents left for job-related reasons, and 6 per cent mentioned migration as the reason for leaving (Table 17).

Marriage was the main reason for leaving home for most men and women from Southern Europe and the Middle East. Two-thirds of the women and 43 per cent of the men left home when they got married. Compared with the Australian-born and other English-speaking respondents, few Southern European and Middle Eastern respondents left home in order to be independent (9 per cent), to study, to travel, or because of their jobs (2-4 per cent of males, no females). Also, a lower proportion left because of conflict.

Of the 13 males from South-East Asia, six (46 per cent) had left home to study. Two (15 per cent) had left to marry, one had left to be independent and another had left to migrate. Three had left for 'other' reasons, which included joining the armed forces or a religious order. Of the women, nearly 40 per cent had left to get married, 14 per cent had left to study and, surprisingly, another 14 per cent had left because of conflict.

Living arrangements after leaving home

The living arrangements of the respondents after they had left home were, of course, related to their reasons for leaving. Those who had left to get married would obviously live with

Table 17 Respondents' reasons for leaving home

	Birthplace					
Reasons for leaving	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Males						
Independence	20%	20%	26%	9%	8%	14%
Marriage	23	12	19	43	15	14
Live with partner	4	4	4	6	0	0
Live with others	3	1	4	0	0	7
Travel	5	14	7	2	0	14
Migrate	1	6	0	19	8	7
Study	7	10	4	2	46	0
Job	16	5	11	4	0	7
Conflict	8	8	11	2	0	21
Other	14	21	15	13	23	14
Females						
Independence	11	15	17	9	7	4
Marriage	38	30	48	68	39	48
Live with partner	4	5	0	0	0	4
Live with others	3	2	0	2	4	0
Travel	4	5	3	0	4	7
Migrate	1	5	3	11	7	11
Study	10	9	0	0	14	19
Job	10	5	10	0	4	7
Conflict	11	14	10	7	14	0
Other	9	10	7	2	7	0
Number of males	595	101	27	47	13	14
Number of females	899	130	29	44	28	27

their marriage partner, while those who had left to be independent might live alone or with friends.

As expected, since many of the men and women from Southern Europe and the Middle East left home to get married, a high proportion of them lived with their legal partners after leaving home. No woman from this region went to live alone after leaving home, although 19 per cent of the men did. Over 20 per cent of the men also went to live with relatives. Presumably some of these men were migrants who lived with relatives on their arrival in Australia.

Men from South-East Asia, many of whom had migrated to study, were more likely than those in other ethnic groups to live in boarding schools, hostels or other institutions. The highest proportion living alone was found in the group from Western and Eastern Europe; many of its members said they left in order to be independent. Many English-speaking respondents went to live with friends or relatives. Ten per cent of women from the English-speaking countries and 5 per cent of Australian-born men and women left home to live with a de facto partner (Table 17a).

Table 17a Respondents' living arrangements after leaving home

	Birthplace					
Living arrangements	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Males						
Alone	11%	19%	26%	19%	8%	14%
Legal partner	25	14	19	49	23	14
De facto partner	5	3	7	0	0	7
Friends	27	20	19	2	15	43
Relatives	8	19	4	23	15	21
Institutions/schools	11	11	7	4	31	0
Other	12	14	15	2	8	0
Females						
Alone	5	5	17	0	7	0
Legal partner	39	32	48	73	43	52
De facto partner	6	10	0	5	7	4
Friends	20	19	17	11	11	7
Relatives	8	15	7	9	14	15
Institutions/schools	10	14	0	0	14	15
Other	12	5	10	2	4	7
Number of males	595	101	27	47	13	14
Number of females	899	130	29	44	28	27

Destination after leaving home

Most people left home to move to another suburb in the same city. However, among the foreign-born, there were many who moved to a different country, presumably Australia. One-third of the men and women from Southern Europe, the Middle East and South-East Asia moved to another country when they left home. Seven of the 30 women from Southern Europe and the Middle East who left home to get married moved to another country, presumably Australia (Table 17b).

Contact with parents after leaving home

No less than 77 per cent of men and women from all birthplace groups said that they kept in close contact with their parents after leaving home. Women were more likely than men to keep in close contact with parents after leaving home, even though a slightly higher proportion of women than men claimed to have left home because of conflict. The highest proportion of respondents keeping in close contact with parents after leaving home was found in the Southern European and Middle Eastern group: 96 per cent of males from this group reported that they kept in contact, compared with less than 86 per cent of males in other groups, while the difference between the females was much less (Table 18).

Over 90 per cent of respondents from Southern Europe and the Middle East said that they felt close to their parents, the highest proportion among all the ethnic categories. This proportion was slightly higher when those of the group who had come to Australia after age

Table 17b Respondents' destination after leaving home

	Birthplace					
Destination	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Males						
Same suburb	13%	8%	22%	17%	15%	21%
Same city	41	40	44	30	15	29
Same State	29	13	7	13	0	0
Different State	12	19	19	4	31	7
Another country	2	17	4	37	39	43
Moved around	2	4	4	0	0	0
Females						
Same suburb	13	16	10	16	14	11
Same city	46	41	41	50	25	30
Same State	29	16	28	2	7	7
Different state	8	10	10	0	14	15
Another country	3	15	7	30	39	37
Moved around	1	2	0	0	0	0
Number of males	595	101	27	47	13	14
Number of females	899	130	29	44	28	27

Table 18 Respondents who felt close to parents and kept in close contact after leaving home

	Birthplace					
Respondents	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Close to parents						
Of total sample:						
Males	84%	82%	78%	91%	67%	85%
Females	85	83	76	93	79	83
Came after age 15:						
Males	—	71	100	93	69	80
Females	—	82	67	95	85	87
Kept in close contact after leaving home						
Males	84	78	78	96	77	86
Females	88	90	86	93	93	93
Number of males	851	125	32	64	18	20
Number of females	1 115	152	29	60	29	30
Came after age 15:						
Males	—	58	11	28	13	10
Females	—	78	6	20	20	23
Number ever left						
Males	595	101	27	47	13	14
Females	899	130	29	44	28	27

15 were considered; nearly all Southern European and Middle Eastern women who had come to Australia after age 15 said that they felt close to their parents (Table 18). Of the other ethnic groups, about 80 per cent felt that they were close to their parents.

While about 40 per cent of Australian-born and other English-speaking respondents returned home after leaving the first time, only about 15 per cent of the Southern European/Middle Eastern respondents did (Table 19). This is again related to their reasons for leaving. Most of the Southern European/Middle Eastern men and women left to get married and therefore were less likely to return compared with the Australian-born and English-speaking respondents who were more likely to leave home for reasons of work, education, independence, or family conflict.

Attitudes to living with parents

More Southern European, Middle Eastern and South-East Asian respondents than English-speaking respondents had positive feelings about living with parents. Although many Southern European and Middle Eastern respondents admitted that living with parents hindered their social life, they also felt accepted at home, found it pleasant and thought that they would have been lonely by themselves. Many were expected to live at home until they were married (Table 20). South-East Asian males held attitudes similar to those of the Southern European and Middle Eastern respondents.

However, South-East Asian females were less positive than their male counterparts about living with their parents. The females in the Southern European/Middle Eastern and South-East Asian groups were not expected to contribute as much to the household income as were the men, but both men and women were expected to help look after the family. This probably meant different things for males and females: daughters were probably expected to help with the daily household duties while sons were expected to look after the family's general welfare. This difference may account for the South-East Asian female respondents feeling less positive about living with parents. The males liked living at home because they usually had most things done for them and were also allowed more freedom. Not quite two-thirds of the female respondents from Southern Europe, the Middle East, South-East Asia and 'elsewhere', compared with 83 per cent of female respondents born in Australia and Europe and 88 per cent of those from other English-speaking countries, said that their parents encouraged them to be independent (Table 20a).

Western and Eastern Europeans were the most qualified of all the groups in their statements about living with parents. This group had the lowest proportion of respondents who found it pleasant or felt accepted, and it had the highest proportion of men who thought that their social life was hindered. A greater proportion of men than women in all groups except the Southern European/Middle Eastern and 'elsewhere' categories said that living at home hindered their sex life.

Table 19 Respondents who returned home after leaving the first time

Birthplace	*Males*	*Females*	*Number ever left* M	F
Australia	46%	38%	595	899
Other English-speaking countries	43	40	101	130
Western and Eastern Europe	41	21	27	29
Southern Europe, Middle East	13	16	47	44
South-East Asia, China	31	18	13	28
Elsewhere	43	26	14	27

Table 20 Males agreeing with specific advantages/disadvantages of living with parents

	Birthplace					
Advantages/disadvantages	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Save more money	79%	72%	63%	72%	67%	80%
Pleasant	85	78	78	94	95	95
Can discuss things	66	63	69	81	61	70
Feel accepted	92	91	84	95	100	85
Lonely by self	39	31	40	66	72	45
Can leave whenever	83	84	88	75	72	75
Social life hindered	20	17	31	27	22	20
Nothing good about it	9	6	13	5	0	5
There are arguments	34	28	34	23	39	30
Feel uncomfortable	19	25	22	13	17	30
Sex life hindered	32	37	31	27	33	25
Expected to contribute to household income	53	58	53	58	61	75
Parents expect R to stay until married	18	9	22	59	45	25
Sex forbidden until R leaves home	30	28	31	38	56	25
Parents want R to be financially independent	52	43	47	38	44	50
R encouraged to be independent	85	87	85	75	89	85
Education encouraged	80	82	75	79	94	85
R can afford to leave	68	69	69	67	39	65
Help look after family	10	4	13	30	56	10
Number of males	857	127	32	64	18	20

Table 20a Females agreeing with specific advantages/disadvantages of living with parents

	Birthplace					
Advantages/disadvantages	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Save more money	79%	67%	59%	63%	55%	53%
Pleasant	83	81	59	93	76	82
Can discuss things	64	54	55	65	62	59
Feel accepted	88	93	83	92	93	85
Lonely by self	55	54	38	65	48	65
Can leave whenever	69	68	52	47	59	53
Social life hindered	22	27	17	37	28	32
Nothing good about it	9	9	17	10	21	15
There are arguments	30	39	34	25	28	50
Feel uncomfortable	21	22	35	10	41	26
Sex life hindered	20	24	21	33	31	44
Expected to contribute to household income	52	65	52	33	48	56
Parents expect R to stay until married	28	26	45	72	59	50
Sex forbidden until R leaves home	61	61	59	72	66	77
Parents want R to be financially independent	38	44	31	27	41	35
R encouraged to be independent	83	88	83	62	62	68
Education encouraged	75	72	72	78	90	91
R can afford to leave	59	69	55	50	48	76
Help look after family	15	17	31	28	55	26
Number of females	1 122	152	29	60	29	34

5 Relationships

Questions were asked in the survey about relationship patterns and sexual experience during adolescence. None of the respondents, apart from those from the Middle East and some men from the South-East Asian countries, were reluctant to answer the questions about sexual experience. (Permission to ask them such questions was requested of the respondents in advance.) Over 90 per cent of the men and women interviewed were willing to answer the questions about sex life patterns; however, only three-quarters of the men from the Middle East and South-East Asia and 69 per cent of women from the Middle East were willing to answer these questions (Table 21).

Relationship patterns during adolescence

There was little difference between Australian-born and foreign-born males in their relationship patterns during the adolescent years. About one-third said their main relationships during ages 15 to 17 involved groups of friends of both sexes. About one in seven dated casually. Women from Southern Europe and the Middle East were less likely than the Australian-born and other English-speaking or European teenagers to have dated during these adolescent years or to have gone out in mixed groups (Table 22).

At age 18, about one out of four males born in Australia and the other English-speaking countries had become serious in his relationship with one person. The proportion in the other ethnic categories was slightly lower (Table 23). The proportion for women was higher than for men, even though men and women had similar relationship activity patterns during the earlier teenage years. Nearly half of the Australian-born, other English-speaking and

Table 21 Respondents willing to answer questions on sexual experience

Birthplace	*Males*	*Females*
Australia	96%	95%
Other English-speaking countries	96	93
Western and Eastern Europe	97	97
Greece	90	80
Italy	94	83
Yugoslavia	100	100
Other Southern European	92	86
Middle East	79	69
South-East Asia, China	78	97
Elsewhere	95	97

Table 22 Relationship patterns at age 15-17

Sex, birthplace	*Main activities at age 15-17*			
	With family	*With friends of same sex*	*With friends mixed*	*Dating casually*
Males				
Australia	6%	25%	44%	14%
Other English-speaking countries	4	26	38	20
Western and Eastern Europe	6	28	47	13
Southern Europe, Middle East	11	11	50	17
South-East Asia, China	22	6	33	33
Elsewhere	10	25	40	15
Females				
Australia	10	16	38	15
Other English-speaking countries	5	19	36	16
Western and Eastern Europe	7	17	38	21
Southern Europe, Middle East	33	17	23	3
South-East Asia, China	28	10	41	10
Elsewhere	29	18	35	9

Table 23 Males serious about one person at age 18 according to education, religion and religious practice

Characteristics	*Birthplace*					
	Australia	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Education						
< 11 years	31%	32%	8% *	18%	14% *	33% *
11-12 years	23	20	11 *	17 *	0	0
Tertiary	21	19	30 *	22 *	25 *	60 *
Religion						
Catholic	28	36	10 *	24	25 *	22 *
Other Christian	24	24	8 *	16 *	17 *	33 *
None	29	25	30 *	0	25	50 *
Religious practice						
Practising	22	24	0	21	18 *	38
Not practising	29	26	29	12 *	14 *	0
All	26	25	16	19	17	30

Note: * = less than five cases in cell.

Western and Eastern European female respondents were in a serious relationship at age eighteen. Less than one-third of the women in the other categories (Southern Europe/ Middle East, South-East Asia and 'elsewhere') were in a serious relationship at that age (Table 23a).

Education and religious commitment did not appear to have any consistent influence on adolescent relationship patterns. Of the Australian-born, the more educated men and

Table 23a Females serious about one person at age 18 according to education, religion and religious practice

	Birthplace					
Characteristics	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Education						
<11 years	56%	66%	47%	35%	33% *	10% *
11-12 years	40	40	75	25 *	18 *	40 *
Tertiary	33	37	33 *	27 *	22 *	43
Religion						
Catholic	41	50	50	34	0	19 *
Other Christian	50	53	71	13 *	44 *	67 *
None	41	50	38	25 *	25 *	50 *
Religious practice						
Practising	42	51	53	31	31	50
Not practising	51	53	50	33 *	15 *	50 *
All	46	52	51	32	24	32

Note: * = less than five cases in cell.

women were less likely to be in a serious relationship at age eighteen. However, this pattern was not observed in the other ethnic groups. Because of the small number of cases involved in the cross-classification of the foreign-born by educational level, it was difficult to draw any reliable conclusions (Tables 23 and 23a).

Sex life patterns

Over two-thirds of the male respondents had had sex by age eighteen. Half of the males from South-East Asia who were willing to answer the question had had sex (Table 24). The proportion of women was lower. Even so, nearly two-thirds of the respondents born in Australia, the other English-speaking countries and Western and Eastern Europe had had sex. Women from Southern Europe, the Middle East and South-East Asia were less likely to have had sex by age 18: two-thirds of the women from Southern Europe and the Middle East and nearly 80 per cent of the South-East Asian women had had no sexual involvement by age eighteen (Table 24a).

Education made little difference. However, religious affiliation appeared to be related to a lower probability of early sexual involvement. Men and women born in Australia and the other English-speaking countries who had no religious affiliation were slightly more likely to have had a sexual involvement by the time they were 18 than those with some religious affiliation. Southern European women who were Catholics were much less likely to have had sex than women who were not. This pattern did not hold for the Southern European men. Sexual involvement at age 18 was clearly related to religious practice in most ethnic groups. Respondents, with the exception of the South-East Asian males, who did not practise a religion were more likely to have had sex than those who did; religious practice did not appear to have the same influence on the sexual activity of the South-East Asian males (Table 24).

Table 24 Males who had had sex by age 18 according to education, occupation, religion and religious practice

	Birthplace					
Characteristics	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Education						
<11 years	79%	81%	69%	76%	50% *	75%
11-12 years	75	88	67	58	33 *	83
Tertiary	67	72	67	75	57 *	80 *
Occupation						
Professional, clerical	68	84	64	69	50 *	89
Trades, labour, other, unskilled	78	84	73	69	50 *	57 *
Religion						
Catholic	72	71	33 *	74	67 *	88
Other Christian	72	79	84	71	40 *	67
None	82	84	80	50 *	50 *	100 *
Religious practice						
Practising	67	69	39	62	56	87
Not practising	80	88	88	88	40 *	50 *
All	74	80	68	69	50	79

Note: * = less than five cases in cell.

De facto relationships

In many English-speaking countries such as the United States, Britain, New Zealand, and including Australia, a small but increasing proportion of couples now live in de facto unions. In some cases, a de facto relationship is perceived as a step towards legal marriage, in others it is perceived as an alternative to legal marriage. The survey showed that 17 per cent of all those interviewed had been in a de facto relationship and that 8 per cent of the men and 5 per cent of the women were in a de facto relationship at the time of the survey.

The proportion of men and women in a de facto relationship was highest in the English-speaking and Western and Eastern European groups. Over 20 per cent of men from these countries had been in a de facto relationship and 9 per cent were in one at the time of the survey. By comparison, only two male respondents from the Southern European/Middle Eastern region (a Yugoslav and a Middle Eastern man) and none from South-East Asia had been in such a relationship (Table 25).

Nearly 30 per cent of women from the English-speaking countries had been in a de facto relationship and 9 per cent were so at the time of the survey — the highest percentage recorded for the different ethnic groups. Women from South-East Asia and Southern Europe were more likely to have been in de facto relationships than men from the same regions. However, no woman from any of the foreign-born groups, apart from one Italian and three from the 'elsewhere' category, was at present in a de facto relationship. Of the Australian-born women, 5 per cent were in a de facto union at the time of the survey. Those

Table 24a Females who had had sex by age 18 according to education, occupation, religion and religious practice

	Birthplace					
Characteristics	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Education						
<11 years	69%	79%	64%	34%	44% *	11% *
11-12 years	57	61	63	44 *	30 *	40 *
Tertiary	44	55	67 *	38 *	22 *	14 *
Occupation						
Professional, clerical	55	73	64 *	24	57 *	32
Trades, unskilled	80	57 *	0	83 *	0	0
(Not working)	61	65	69 *	35	33	10
Religion						
Catholic	54	68	62	22	17 *	15 *
Other Christian	59	67	57 *	60	38 *	33 *
None	69	72	75	50 *	50 *	50 *
Religious practice						
Practising	49	65	53	31	27 *	20
Not practising	72	71	77	71	39	25 *
All	59	68	64	37	22	21

Note: * = less than five cases in cell.

in de facto relationships were more likely not to be practising a religion but no difference was observed between Catholics and other Christians (Tables 26 and 26a).

That few men and women from Southern Europe, the Middle East and South-East Asia were in de facto relationships was understandable considering that they saw few advantages in such relationships. Many of them thought that there would be a lot of social disapproval and that there would be problems if there were children, although surprisingly the proportion agreeing with the latter statement was lowest among the Southern European/Middle Eastern women (Tables 27 and 27a). While most Australian-born and other English-speaking respondents thought it was all right for a couple to live together without planning to get married, less than half of the respondents from the Southern European, Middle Eastern and South-East Asian countries approved of it.

Table 25 Respondents who had been in a de facto relationship and/or were now in a de facto relationship

	Had been		*Were now*	
Birthplace	*Males*	*Females*	*Males*	*Females*
Australia	18%	17%	8%	5%
Other English-speaking countries	21	29	9	9
Western and Eastern Europe	28	7	9	0
Southern Europe, Middle East	3	5	2	2
South-East Asia, China	0	14	0	0
Elsewhere	20	21	5	9

Table 26 Males ever in a de facto relationship according to education, religion and religious practice

	Birthplace					
Characteristic	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Education						
<11 years	21%	12%	46%	3%*	0%	11%*
11-12 years	16	14	0	0	0	17 *
Tertiary	14	31	30 *	6 *	0	40 *
Religion						
Catholic	16	36	20 *	3 *	0	0
Other Christian	15	14	25 *	5 *	0	33 *
None	26	23	40 *	0	0	50 *
Religious practice						
Practising	10	12	7 *	2 *	0	19 *
Not practising	25	26	41	6 *	0	25 *

Note: * = less than five cases in cell.

Table 26a Females ever in a de facto relationship according to education, religion and religious practice

	Birthplace					
Characteristic	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Education						
<11 years	17%	33%	0%	5%*	22%*	20%*
11-12 years	19	17	13 *	0	18 *	30 *
Tertiary	16	32	17 *	9 *	0	14 *
Religion						
Catholic	15	31	0	5 *	0	10 *
Other Christian	14	25	0	0	11 *	22 *
None	34	39	25 *	25 *	25 *	100 *
Religious practice						
Practising	11	19	0	2 *	13 *	12 *
Not practising	25	37	14 *	22 *	15 *	50 *

Note: * = less than five cases in cell.

Table 27 Males agreeing with specific advantages/disadvantages of de facto relationships

	Birthplace					
Advantages/disadvantages	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
No legal responsibility	29%	22%	16%	36%	28%	40%
Regular sex life	58	54	47	63	44	50
Trial marriage	60	57	59	42	56	65
Can save money	43	48	53	45	61	45
Easier to get out of	77	73	63	77	72	70
All right to live together without planning marriage	83	86	75	50	39	75
Lack of security	41	33	38	53	44	35
Problems if children	67	65	53	69	72	45
Social disapproval	39	32	41	75	56	35
No advantages over marriage	39	30	44	44	45	60

Table 27a Females agreeing with specific advantages/disadvantages of de facto relationships

	Birthplace					
Advantages/disadvantages	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
No legal responsibility	37%	23%	38%	43%	48%	35%
Regular sex life	67	70	55	57	38	62
Trial marriage	54	63	41	37	52	35
Can save money	34	34	41	33	41	50
Easier to get out of	76	79	55	67	52	77
All right to live together without planning marriage	76	85	66	48	38	68
Lack of security	53	44	59	57	48	68
Problems if children	74	78	83	65	79	74
Social disapproval	47	39	45	67	48	35
No advantages over marriage	47	46	48	50	52	53

6 Marriage

Data from the 1981 Census on marital status by age provide a better comparison of marriage patterns among the different birthplace groups than the smaller AFF Project survey. Using the Census data, Table 28 shows the proportions ever married among men and women aged 20-34 years, the population relevant to this study.

1981 Census: proportions married

Compared with the Australian-born, a higher proportion of the foreign-born in their twenties had been married. Over 25 per cent of European men aged 20-24 had been married compared with 22 per cent of Australian-born men. The Netherlands, Southern Europe and the Middle East had the highest proportions of married men in that age group: about 30 per cent had been married. These areas also had higher proportions of married men aged 30-34 years. The pattern among women was similar. Over 70 per cent of Yugoslav women aged 20-24 and 64 per cent of women from Greece and the other Southern European countries (excluding Italy) had been married compared with 44 per cent of Australian-born women.

Africa, the Pacific Islands and most of the Asian countries had lower proportions of men and women who were married than Australia. Only 12 per cent of the men aged 20-24 from South-East Asia (excluding Indo-China) and 37 per cent of their female counterparts had been married. Less than 20 per cent of men in the same age group from Africa, South Asia, the Pacific Islands, New Zealand and North America had been married. Some of these people could have been tertiary students and therefore more likely to marry later. There was no difference in the proportions of Indo-Chinese and Australian-born married in the 20-24 age group, although the proportion married at age 25 was lower among the Indo-Chinese.

Australian Family Formation Project: proportions married

Although the sample size of the Institute's AFF Project survey was small, it was possible to compare the median age at first marriage of respondents aged 28-34. This older age group was chosen because Australian marriage patterns show that over half of the men and women in this age group have been married by age 28 (McDonald, 1982: 187). Among the Australian-born, the median age at first marriage was 24.6 years for men and 21.6 years for women. The European-born male respondents in this age group had a somewhat higher median age at first marriage than Australian-born males, but European-born female respondents married at a slightly younger age than Australian-born women. The Asian-born respondents had the highest median age at first marriage: 28 years for men and 24.2 years for women (Table 29).

Table 28 Respondents aged 20-34 ever married according to age group

	Males			*Females*		
Birthplace	*20-24*	*25-29*	*30-34*	*20-24*	*25-29*	*30-34*
Australia	22%	65%	84%	44%	80%	91%
UK and Ireland	26	68	86	50	82	93
Germany	26	66	83	48	81	91
Netherlands	33	75	89	55	87	94
Other N-W European	29	58	80	57	78	90
Greece	28	72	90	65	93	97
Italy	29	73	89	55	88	95
Yugoslavia	29	75	90	72	93	97
Other S European	32	75	86	64	91	95
Eastern Europe	22	57	81	54	81	93
Middle East	31	68	87	72	91	95
Africa	19	64	83	45	80	92
South Asia	18	60	85	47	83	91
Indo-China	22	56	80	45	70	81
Other South-East, East Asia	12	54	81	37	77	85
USA, Canada	18	58	79	38	73	87
Other American	24	70	87	53	87	93
New Zealand	20	55	80	37	71	87
Pacific Islands	19	63	82	43	77	89

Source: 1981 Census of Population and Housing.

Table 29 Median age at first marriage of respondents aged 28-34

	Males		*Females*	
Birthplace	*Median age*	*Number*	*Median age*	*Number*
Australia	25	285	22	477
Other English-speaking countries	24	50	21	78
Western and Eastern Europe	26	16	21	18
Southern Europe, Middle East	25	36	21	34
South-East Asia, China	28	6	24	17

Marital stability

The incidence of separation or divorce was lowest among the Southern European/Middle Eastern men and women: 98 per cent of the men and 95 per cent of the women aged 18-34 who had been married were still in their first marriage (see also Josephian, 1983). By comparison, 88 per cent of Australian-born men and 81 per cent of Australian-born women who had been married were still in their first marriage, and the proportion was even lower among men and women from the other English-speaking countries (Table 30). The sex difference results from the fact that more women had been married for a longer time.

Since so few of the non-English-speaking foreign-born were separated or divorced, it is difficult to examine the consequences of marital breakdown by birthplace groups. Table 31 shows the current marital status of those who had been separated or divorced. A significant proportion of divorced men and women born in Australia, the other English-speaking countries and Western and Eastern Europe had remarried and some were in de facto

Table 30 Respondents ever married whose first marriage was still intact

Birthplace	*Males*	*Number ever married*	*Females*	*Number ever married*
Australia	88%	363	81%	700
Other English-speaking countries	86	65	76	104
Western and Eastern Europe	87	15	91	22
Southern Europe, Middle East	98	42	95	40
South-East Asia, China	83	6	90	20
Elsewhere	83	6	89	26

relationships. Of the four Southern European and Middle Eastern respondents who were separated or divorced, only one (a Yugoslav man) had remarried. None of the three persons from South-East Asia who had been separated or divorced had remarried or entered into a marriage-like relationship. Since the incidence of marital breakdown is low among these groups, a much larger sample is needed in order to obtain enough separated or divorced persons for a study of the consequences of marital breakdown.

A strong family tradition and the role of religion in their lives probably helps to explain the relatively high level of marital stability among the Southern European and Middle Eastern respondents. Other related factors might be their choice of partners, reasons for marriage and attitudes to marriage and the family, to be discussed in the following sections.

Choice of partner

Questions were asked in the survey about where respondents met or expected to meet their partners, what qualities they considered important in partners and their parents' influence on their selection of partners.

Table 31 Present marital status of respondents ever separated or divorced

	Present marital status				
Sex, birthplace	*Married*	*De facto*	*Separated*	*Divorced*	*Total*
Males	*Number*				
Australia	18	9	7	13	47
Other English-speaking countries	2	3	2	3	10
Western and Eastern Europe	4	0	0	1	5
Greece	0	0	1	0	1
Yugoslavia	1	0	0	0	1
South-East Asia, China	0	0	1	0	1
Elsewhere	0	0	1	0	1
Females					
Australia	32	16	37	49	134
Other English-speaking countries	11	1	5	8	25
Western and Eastern Europe	2	0	1	1	4
Italy	0	1	0	0	1
Middle East	0	0	1	0	1
South-East Asia, China	0	0	1	1	2
Elsewhere	2	2	0	0	4

About one-quarter of all the respondents met their partners at some form of recreational activity, such as dances, discos or sporting events, during holidays or at the beach and many of those who intended to marry indicated that they expected to meet their partners at these same places. Friends were also important: many respondents had met or expected to meet their partners through them. Southern European and Middle Eastern men and women were more likely to meet their partners through parents, relatives and friends than were the respondents in the other groups. One-third of the South-East Asian males met or expected to meet their partners at school or university; and three out of the 11 females without partners also expected to meet their partners at these places. However, those South-East Asian women with partners had met their partners through parents and friends and at recreational places (Tables 32 and 32a).

Marriage with another person from the same region of origin is also more common among respondents from certain birthplace groups. Table 33 shows the proportions of men and women having a partner born in the same group of countries and the proportions with an Australian-born partner. Four out of the five South-East Asian male respondents had a partner from the same birthplace category. As mentioned earlier, this category had the highest proportion of respondents coming to Australia after the age of 15 and the men were probably married before their arrival in this country. About half of the male respondents

Table 32 Where males met or expected to meet their partners

	Birthplace					
Source	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Had met through						
Childhood connections	3	0	0	3	0	1
School, university	32	8	0	0	2	0
Parents, relatives	42	6	1	9	1	0
Friends	52	7	1	4	1	1
Recreational places	98	14	6	9	0	2
Church	10	3	1	2	1	0
Streets	49	11	0	1	0	0
Work	44	9	5	7	0	0
Other	59	11	3	7	0	1
Number	389	69	17	42	5	5
Expected to meet through						
School, university	40	8	1	2	4	0
Parents, relatives	6	0	2	1	1	0
Friends	80	5	3	5	2	4
Recreation places	131	19	5	4	2	4
Church	7	1	1	1	1	0
Streets	0	1	0	0	0	0
Work	6	1	0	0	0	0
Not appropiate*	198	23	3	9	3	7
Number	468	58	15	22	13	15

Note: * = includes those who did not expect to marry or would not be looking for a partner.

Table 32a Where females met or expected to meet their partners

	Birthplace					
Source	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Had met through						
Childhood connections	10	1	0	0	0	1
School, university	35	8	1	1	0	3
Parents, relatives	73	11	2	9	2	3
Friends	104	7	3	9	3	6
Recreation places	158	19	8	6	5	4
Church	18	1	0	0	1	0
Streets	68	14	0	7	1	3
Work	95	13	4	1	2	5
Other	80	26	2	6	4	2
Number	641	100	20	39	18	27
Expected to meet through						
School, university	49	1	0	1	3	1
Parents, relatives	8	4	0	1	2	0
Friends	75	9	3	3	2	3
Recreation places	87	11	1	5	0	0
Church	9	0	0	0	1	0
Work	9	1	0	0	0	0
Not appropriate*	244	26	5	11	3	3
Number	481	52	9	21	11	7

Note: * = includes those who did not expect to marry or would not be looking for a partner.

from Southern Europe, the Middle East and the English-speaking countries had partners born in the same region as themselves, but only a quarter of those born in Western and Eastern Europe did. More than half of the women from Southern Europe and the Middle East had partners in the same birthplace category; only one-third of those from Europe, excluding Southern Europe, and 'elsewhere' did.

A higher proportion of foreign-born men than foreign-born women had an Australian-born partner, with the exception of the South-East Asian and Chinese respondents. Nearly two-thirds of the men from the Western and Eastern European countries had an Australian-born partner, compared with 29 per cent of the Southern European and Middle Eastern men and 20 per cent of the South-East Asian men. The difference between the proportions of women in the various groups with an Australian-born partner was smaller. The lowest proportion with an Australian-born partner came from the Southern European/Middle Eastern and 'elsewhere' categories (26 per cent).

In discussing partners' attributes, most men and women in all birthplace groups considered it important that their partners should have similar goals and ideas as themselves, and a 'great personality'. Most men also like their partners to be 'attractive', although only half the women considered this quality to be important. Education was important to the South-East Asians and Chinese; two-thirds of these respondents compared with less than

Table 33 Respondents with an Australian-born partner or a partner born in the same region

	Australian-born partner		*Partner from same region*	
Birthplace	*Males*	*Females*	*Males*	*Females*
Australia	88%	83%	88%	83%
Other English-speaking countries	48	45	42	42
Western and Eastern Europe	65	40	24	35
Southern Europe, Middle East	29	26	48	56
South-East Asia, China	20	28	80	44
Elsewhere	40	26	40	33
All foreign-born*	43	37	57	63

Note: * refers to all foreign-born with an Australian-born partner and all foreign-born with a foreign-born partner.

half of the others thought it was important that partners should have similar educational qualifications (Table 34).

About one-third of the respondents thought that a similar ethnic background was important. The exception was West and East European males — only 19 per cent considered a similar ethnic background to be important. Of the men, those born in Southern Europe and the Middle East were more likely to consider this quality important; of the women, those from South-East Asia were more likely to consider it important. Men and women in these two categories more than those in the other groups also thought that their parents would object to them marrying someone of a different race. Fathers appeared to be more tolerant: more respondents thought their mothers rather than their fathers would object.

The number of respondents across the board who considered religious beliefs to be important was larger than the number who emphasised similar ethnic background; half of all men and about 60 per cent of women born in Southern Europe, the Middle East, and South-East Asia considered this characteristic to be important in a partner. Respondents from these regions also thought that their parents would object more to their marrying someone of a different religion than someone of a different ethnic background. However, English-speaking respondents thought that their parents would be more likely to object to them marrying a partner of a different race than of a different religion. It will be recalled that the proportion practising a religion was highest for the Southern European and Middle Eastern groups and lowest for the English-speaking countries.

Most of the respondents with a partner said that their parents approved of their choice. This approval was more important to women than to men, and also more important to men and women from Southern Europe and the Middle East than to respondents in the other groups. It was therefore not surprising that only 65 per cent of these men and 57 per cent of the women would choose to marry their partners without their parents' approval and that 13-14 per cent said they would not know what to do if their parents disapproved. The South-East Asian respondents were as likely as Southern European and Middle Eastern men and women not to go against their parents' wishes. These two groups of respondents differed from the others, and especially from the English-speaking respondents, most of whom indicated that they would marry their partner even if their parents disapproved. Although few men and women would choose parents over partner, on average, women were less likely than men to go against their parents' wishes and more likely to compromise if their parents disapproved of their choice of partner (Table 35).

Table 35 Respondents' views of what they would do if their parents disapproved of their choice of partner

	Birthplace					
Anticipated action	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Males						
Choose partner	73%	80%	71%	65%	69%	73%
Compromise	18	12	18	13	15	20
Choose parents	2	3	12	9	8	7
Unsure/don't know	7	5	0	13	8	0
Females						
Choose partner	67	72	67	57	55	70
Compromise	22	16	0	24	18	20
Choose parents	3	3	11	5	18	0
Unsure/don't know	8	8	22	14	9	10
Number of males	511	65	17	23	13	15
Number of females	516	61	9	21	11	10

The proper time to marry

It has been suggested that there has been a strong return recently to the 19th century maxim of 'the proper time to marry' (McDonald, 1982).

> Today the economically 'proper time' is when the couple have sufficient savings to begin marriage 'in a substantial, well-furnished house' while the psychologically 'proper time' is when one's 'personality is fully developed' through travel, career and freedom of relationship with a broad range of people (p.190).

Evidence of the idea of an economically and psychologically proper time to marry was strongest for the South-East Asians, followed by the Southern European and Middle East respondents, the Australian-born, and less so for the Western and Eastern Europeans. It should be kept in mind, however, that each of these groups may also have its own definition of what is economically and psychologically the proper time to marry, which may differ from that specified above.

Among the unmarried respondents, nearly all the South-East Asian men and more than three-quarters of the South-East Asian women felt that they would like to be more mature and financially secure before they married. Financial security was also important to many respondents from Southern Europe and the Middle East, and to Australian-born men. Overall, men were more concerned about financial security than women: women were more likely to agree that 'marriage will happen when it happens'. Many respondents from South-East Asia also said that they would like to finish their education before getting married (Table 36).

Few of the unmarried men and women felt that parents, relatives or friends put pressure on them to marry. The exceptions were the South-East Asians, of whom about 20 per cent (five out of 24) felt some pressure, mainly from parents, to marry earlier than they would like (Table 37).

Table 34 Characteristics respondents looked for in a partner

Looked-for characteristics	*Birthplace*						
	Australia	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*	*Total*
Males							
Similar education	49%	48%	34%	47%	78%	40%	49%
Similar social background	56	49	47	47	61	60	54
Attractive appearance	80	80	75	81	78	75	80
Similar ethnic background	32	31	19	34	28	25	31
Similar religious beliefs	33	31	28	50	50	50	34
Similar ideas	78	79	66	80	89	70	78
Similar occupational background	9	4	16	14	17	20	9
A great personality	77	80	78	69	83	80	77
Similar goals	81	83	84	77	89	65	81
Females							
Similar education	54	53	35	48	66	59	53
Similar social background	61	57	35	55	62	53	60
Attractive appearance	59	57	41	57	62	59	59
Similar ethnic background	37	32	34	43	52	32	37
Similar religious beliefs	39	35	35	62	59	41	40
Similar ideas	80	78	76	68	86	65	79
Similar occupational background	12	9	10	15	28	3	12
A great personality	68	68	72	72	66	68	68
Similar goals	83	83	79	59	69	79	82

Table 36 Respondents who agreed with statements on the 'proper time to marry'

	Birthplace					
Statement	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Males						
'Before I marry I would like to':						
'be more mature'	52%	44%	33%	48%	92%	64%
'be financially secure'	83	75	67	87	100	93
'finish my education'	37	44	28	35	58	36
'I would rather have children later in life'	60	56	39	70	67	71
'Marriage will happen when it happens'	82	84	72	74	75	79
Females						
'Before I marry I would like to':						
'be more mature'	49	35	29	53	78	50
'be financially secure'	67	57	43	74	89	63
'finish my education'	31	27	29	32	44	25
'I would rather have children later in life'	52	45	14	68	44	50
'Marriage will happen when it happens'	83	88	86	90	78	75
Number of males	462	55	18	23	12	14
Number of females	434	49	7	19	9	8

The ultimate question, 'Why marry?' brought forth further indications of the concept of 'the proper time to marry'. Love was the most frequently mentioned reason for marriage, the next being the desire to have a family, a home and a future with their partner (Table 38). However, 17 per cent of the men and 11 per cent of the women also said that one of the reasons they got married was because marriage was the 'next step' or the 'right step' in life for them. Male respondents born in Australia, the other English-speaking countries and Western and Eastern Europe were more likely than females as a whole or males born in other places to say that marriage was the next or right step for them.

Attitudes

A knowledge of the respondents' perceptions and expectations of marriage clarifies some of the statistics on marriage and divorce for the different ethnic groups. Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about the specific advantages and disadvantages of marriage and about divorce (Tables 39 and 40).

Southern European and Middle Eastern men and women were consistently more likely to agree with statements about the positive aspects of marriage and to recognise its responsibilities and limitations. They had the highest proportion agreeing that marriage provided love, warmth and happiness, a regular sex life and the opportunity to have and bring up children, and that marriage also developed a sense of responsibility. A higher proportion in this

Table 37 Respondents who felt any pressure to marry earlier than they wanted to and source of pressure

	Birthplace					
	Australia	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Males						
Felt pressure to marry	8%	4%	12%	9%	23%	13%
Source of pressure:						
Parents	(13)	(1)	(2)	(2)	(3)	(2)
Relatives	(6)	(1)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(0)
Friends	(11)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(0)	(0)
Pregnancy	(2)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)
Other	(19)	(1)	(1)	(0)	(2)	(2)
Females						
Felt pressure to marry	7%	11%	0%	5%	18%	20%
Source of pressure:						
Parents	(22)	(3)	(0)	(0)	(2)	(2)
Relatives	(15)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(1)
Friends	(11)	(2)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)
Pregnancy	(4)	(1)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)
Other	(6)	(3)	(0)	(1)	(0)	(1)

Note: The figures in parentheses refer to the number of cases.

Table 38 Reasons for marriage most frequently mentioned by married respondents

	Birthplace					
Reason	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Males						
Love	55%	59%	43%	44%	67%	50%
Family, home together	19	9	14	34	17	21
Next/right step	16	20	43	13	0	7
Happy together	11	15	21	18	17	7
To have children	10	8	0	6	17	7
Females						
Love	63	53	46	55	55	64
Family, home together	13	7	18	28	10	15
Next/right step	11	8	18	17	20	18
Happy together	12	10	23	14	5	15
To have children	8	7	0	7	10	9
Number of males	357	66	14	32	6	14
Number of females	603	100	22	29	20	33

Table 39 Respondents agreeing with specific advantages/disadvantages of marriage

	Birthplace					
Advantages/disadvantages	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Males						
Economic security	45%	44%	44%	55%	44%	50%
Love, warmth, happiness	86	79	75	94	89	80
Regular sex life	83	71	91	91	78	85
Sense of responsibility	81	76	81	91	89	90
Having children	73	72	69	91	78	70
Easier to save money	36	34	41	41	56	55
No freedom/independence	32	34	34	52	67	55
Take one another for granted	47	52	31	36	45	55
No advantages	12	12	3	16	0	15
Marriage is for life	75	65	75	94	89	85
Females						
Economic security	61	53	66	72	66	56
Love, warmth, happiness	84	80	90	90	86	77
Regular sex life	81	80	79	82	83	79
Sense of responsibility	73	65	72	82	79	82
Having children	64	65	66	80	59	71
Easier to save money	29	26	52	40	41	36
No freedom/independence	29	28	41	35	45	41
Take one another for granted	46	53	41	47	21	12
No advantages	12	13	10	13	21	12
Marriage is for life	73	68	69	78	66	79
Number of males	857	127	32	64	18	20
Number of females	1 122	152	29	60	29	34

category than in the others also agreed that marriage gave economic security. Half of the Southern European/Middle Eastern men, compared with one-third of the English-speaking men agreed that one sacrificed independence and personal freedom when one married. This group also had the highest proportion (94 per cent of the men and 78 per cent of the women) agreeing that 'marriage is for life'. (Table 39.)

The South-East Asians also came close to the Southern European and Middle Eastern respondents in their attitude to marriage. In comparison with these two groups, respondents from the English-speaking countries were more cynical about marriage, with more than half agreeing that people took one another for granted after marriage, and only two-thirds agreeing that 'marriage is for life'.

It is difficult to say whether it was the attitude of these people which determined their marital status patterns as shown in Table 30 or whether their marital status influenced their attitude. Did the Southern European and Middle Eastern respondents feel more positive about marriage because most of them were still in their first marriage, or did their attitude

Table 40 Respondents agreeing with statements about divorce

	Birthplace					
Statement	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Males						
'Couple should be able to get divorce if want to'	91%	91%	84%	81%	78%	95%
'Feel devastated if spouse wanted divorce'	65	55	56	75	56	60
'Frightened to be single at 40'	53	42	50	53	17	60
'Divorce is too easy to get'	45	37	59	75	67	70
Females						
'Couple should be able to get divorce if want to'	93	94	79	85	69	88
'Feel devastated if spouse wanted divorce'	68	64	62	60	58	68
'Frightened to be single at 40'	52	47	45	62	48	32
'Divorce is too easy to get'	52	43	69	67	52	68
Number of males	857	127	32	64	18	20
Number of females	1 122	152	29	60	29	34

contribute to the low incidence of marital dissolution among them? It is likely that attitude and behaviour reinforced each other.

Most people agreed that a couple should be able to get a divorce if they wanted to. The proportion agreeing was lowest for men and women born in South-East Asia (78 per cent and 69 per cent respectively) and highest for persons born in Australia and the other English-speaking countries (over 90 per cent). A higher proportion of respondents born in the non-English-speaking countries also thought that it was too easy to obtain a divorce. Men were more likely to think this than women, with the exception of those men from Western and Eastern Europe and the English-speaking countries. About 60 per cent of the Southern European/Middle Eastern women agreed that they would be 'frightened to be single at 40' and felt that they would be 'devastated' if their spouse mentioned divorce. However, while 75 per cent of the men in that group felt that they would be 'devastated' if their spouse mentioned divorce, only 53 per cent said that they would be frightened to be single at age forty. Compared with the Southern European/Middle Eastern women, even more Australian-born women thought that they would be 'devastated' if their spouse mentioned divorce, although fewer agreed that they would be afraid of being single at age 40 (Table 40).

7 Child Bearing

Fertility differences between the ethnic groups have been indicated in many previous studies of child-bearing patterns in Australia (Ware, 1975; Ruzicka and Caldwell, 1977, 1982). These studies have all been based on data for older women in the 1970s. Data from the Institute's AFF Project survey allow us to examine the fertility patterns and intentions of young women now in their family-building years, providing some indication of current patterns and future trends. The survey also collected additional information on respondents' ideas of the 'proper time to have children' and reasons for having children, thus providing an insight into some of the factors underlying the observed fertility patterns.

Fertility and desired family size

Eighty-six per cent of South-East Asian and Chinese women under age 30 who had ever married had had at least one child, as had 80 per cent of Southern European and Middle Eastern women in the same category. In comparison, only 69 per cent of Australian-born women in that category had. Most of the women in the age group 30-34 had had at least one child; there was not much difference between the birthplace groups.

The South-East Asian and Chinese women under the age of 30 had an average of 1.9 children; the Southern European and Middle Eastern women and the Australian-born women averaged 1.3 births. Women from the other English-speaking countries had a slightly higher fertility than the Australian-born. Only those from Western and Eastern Europe and the 'elsewhere' category had lower fertility (Table 41).

Table 41 Females ever married who had had children and average number of children ever had according to age group

	% ever had children		*Average no of children*		*No of females*	
Birthplace	*Under 30 yrs*	*30-34 yrs*	*Under 30 yrs*	*30-34 yrs*	*Under 30 yrs*	*30-34 yrs*
Australia	69%	91%	1.3	2.2	377	324
Other English-speaking countries	79	86	1.4	2.1	47	58
Western and Eastern Europe	71	93	1.1	2.3	7	15
Southern Europe, Middle East	80	88	1.3	2.1	15	25
South-East Asia, China	86	92	1.9	1.6	7	13
Elsewhere	50	83	0.6	1.6	14	12
All	70	90	1.3	2.1	467	447

For women aged 30-34 who had ever married, the pattern was a little different. The Western and Eastern European women had higher fertility than the Australian-born women but the Southern European/Middle Eastern women and the South-East Asians had lower fertility. This pattern suggests that although the Southern Europeans and South-East Asians were likely to have children in the early years of marriage, their family size at later ages might still be smaller than that of the Australian-born.

Indeed, a comparison of the family sizes desired by the different groups shows that Australian-born wives expected to have slightly larger families than foreign-born wives. (Although every respondent was asked about the number of children he or she would like, discussion of desired family size is restricted in this report to the sample of men and women married at the time of the survey because of the question's greater relevance to them than to single men and women.) Forty-seven per cent of Australian-born wives wanted three or more children compared with 43 per cent or less among the foreign-born. Married women from South-East Asia and China were the most homogeneous in their expectations concerning family size: two-thirds wanted two children and only 11 per cent wanted three or more. Single-child families were not popular with the Southern European, Middle Eastern, English-speaking, 'elsewhere' and Australian-born respondents. However, about one in five women from Western and Eastern Europe and South-East Asia wanted to have only one child (Table 42). On average, the Australian-born wives wanted 2.5 children, the South-East Asians wanted 1.9 and the other groups fell in between.

There was little difference in desired fertility between married women under age 30 and those aged 30-34 across the groups, with the exception of the Western and Eastern European women; in this group the younger cohort expected an average of 1.6 children, while the older cohort anticipated an average of 2.5. There was also no consistent pattern by educational level across the various birthplace groups (Table 43). Among wives born in Australia and the other English-speaking countries, the more educated wanted slightly smaller families than the less educated, but the reverse was true of the Southern European, Middle Eastern and Asian wives. Most working wives wanted smaller families than did non-working wives. The Asian women were the exception: those who were working wanted 2.3 children, the non-working wanted only 1.6. Further tabulations controlling for other characteristics are necessary to see if this pattern is real or spurious, but a larger sample would be needed for this.

Catholics differed across the groups regarding desired family size. Australian-born Catholic wives wanted the largest families, an average of 2.8 children, while the Southern European Catholics wanted 2.5 and those from the other European countries wanted 2.1. This finding

Table 42 Females married at present according to number of children desired

Birthplace	*Females wanting to have children numbering:* 0	1	2	3	4 or more	*Average number wanted*	*Number of females*
Australia	6%	5%	42%	31%	17%	3%	586
Other English-speaking countries	8	2	51	28	11	2	89
Western and Eastern Europe	5	20	40	25	10	2	20
Southern Europe, Middle East	8	3	46	27	16	2	37
South-East Asia, China	6	17	67	6	6	2	18
Elsewhere	8	0	63	17	13	2	24
All	6	5	44	29	15	3	774

Table 43 Family size desired by females married at present according to demographic and socio-economic characteristics

	Birthplace					
Characteristic	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
	Average number of children desired					
Age (years)						
Under 30	2.5	2.3	1.6	2.4	2.0	2.2
30-34	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.4	1.8	2.3
Education						
<11 years	2.6	2.4	2.7	2.4	1.8	2.7
11-12 years	2.5	2.4	1.0*	2.9	1.8	2.5
Tertiary	2.4	2.0	1.7*	2.7*	2.0	1.8
Work status						
Working	2.3	2.1	1.7	2.1	2.3	2.2
Not working	2.7	2.5	2.7	2.6	1.6	2.4
Religion						
Catholic	2.8	2.4	2.1	2.5	2.5*	2.5
Other Christian	2.5	2.3	2.7	2.9	2.0	1.7
None	2.0	2.2	1.0*	1.3*	1.7*	2.0*
Religious practice						
Practising	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.2	2.4
Not practising	2.4	2.3	1.6	1.2	1.5	1.5*
Came to Australia						
Before age 15	—	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.8
After age 15	—	2.3	2.0	2.5	1.8	2.2
All	2.5	2.3	2.2	2.4	1.9	2.3

Note: * = less than five cases in cell.

agrees with those of earlier studies (Callan, 1980; Ware, 1975). It has been suggested that the foreign-born Catholics are less attached than the native-born to the Australian Catholic system of values (Day, 1964, as quoted in Callan, 1980: 32) and that the Australian Catholic education system strongly reinforces the Church's traditional teachings (Callan, 1980: 32). The practice of a religion was associated with a larger desired family size for all the birthplace groups.

Length of residence in Australia did not affect the family size desired by respondents in the different birthplace groups in the same way. While most of the foreign-born wives who came to Australia after age 15 wanted slightly smaller families, the reverse was observed among wives from Southern Europe and the Middle East.

Australian-born male respondents did not differ much from female respondents in their desired family size. Male respondents who were married at the time of the survey wanted an average of 2.4 children. However, male respondents from Southern Europe, the Middle East and South-East Asia wanted larger families than did the female respondents from the same regions and the Australian-born males. The Southern European/Middle Eastern men

wanted an average of 2.9 children and the five South-East Asian men wanted an average of 2.6. Men from Western and Eastern Europe wanted smaller families, on average 1.8 children. They and the male respondents from the other English-speaking countries did not differ much from the women of the same regions regarding desired family size (Table 44).

Australian-born males under the age of 30 wanted larger families (an average of 2.6 children) than those aged 30-34 (an average of 2.2). It is difficult to account for this pattern without further examination of the characteristics of this younger cohort. Men born in the other English-speaking countries, Europe and the Middle East who were under 30 wanted slightly smaller families than those aged 30-34. The practice of a religion is also associated with a larger desired family size for most males; only the Western and Eastern European men desired the same sized family regardless of religious practice (Table 44).

Since there were fewer male than female respondents married at the time of the survey, division of the male respondents into the other socio-economic groups resulted in very small cell sizes. Consequently, any average desired family sizes obtained from male respondents according to characteristics such as education, occupation and religion, were likely to be unreliable.

Table 44 Family size desired by males married at present according to demographic and socio-economic characteristics

	Birthplace					
Characteristic	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
	Average number of children desired					
Age (years)						
Under 30	2.6	1.9	1.4	2.8	2.7*	1.7*
30-34	2.2	2.6	2.2	3.0	2.5*	2.5*
Education						
< 11 years	2.5	2.1	1.6	3.3	2.0*	1.7*
11-12 years	2.4	2.1	1.8*	2.1	—	3.0*
Tertiary	2.4	2.7	2.4	2.7	3.5*	2.0*
Occupation						
Professional, clerical	2.4	1.2	2.1	2.8	3.0*	2.5*
Trades, labourer, etc.	2.4	2.3	1.7	3.2	2.5*	1.7*
Religion						
Catholic	2.7	1.7	1.6	2.9	—	1.7*
Other Christian	2.5	2.4	2.0	3.2	3.0*	2.5*
None	1.9	2.1	2.3*	2.0*	2.0*	—
Religious practice						
Practising	2.6	2.5	1.9	3.2	3.5*	2.0
Not practising	2.2	2.1	1.9	2.4	2.0*	—
All	2.4	2.2	1.9	2.9	2.6	2.0
Number	325	57	14	39	5	5

Note: * = less than five cases in cell.

Having children: preferences, pressures and reasons

In this section some of the information on the child-bearing decisions made by the different ethnic groups will be examined. Specifically, the section will look at the respondents' preferences for sons or daughters, ideas about the timing of children, and reasons for having children.

About one-half to two-thirds of men and women in all the birthplace groups wanted to have children of both sexes, and about one-third said they would not mind having either sex. There is evidence of a slight preference for sons among the Australian and other English-speaking husbands but not among the men in the other groups. Only about 20 per cent of men from the other English-speaking countries said they would not mind having either boys or girls and 12 per cent preferred just boys. Western and Eastern Europeans were the least likely to mind whether they had boys or girls. Women from South-East Asia, Southern Europe and the Middle East were also less likely than men from the same regions to mind having children of either sex (Table 45).

About one-third of male respondents with a partner at present said that they felt some pressure from their parents, their partners and themselves to have children. Men from Southern Europe, the Middle East and South-East Asia were more likely to feel such pressure from their partners. A lower proportion of women said that they felt pressure from their parents or partners to have children, probably because more women than men in this age group already had children. About one-third of the women felt some pressure from themselves to have children. Possibly this pressure arose from their awareness that they were in their prime reproductive years and that it was less desirable to have children once they were over the age of thirty-five. Pressure from self was lowest among Australian-born males (Table 46).

Table 45 Preferences of respondents with a partner at present for sons or daughters

	Birthplace					
Preference	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Males						
Both sexes	60%	64%	47%	64%	80%	20%
Either, don't mind	31	22	47	33	20	80
Just boys	6	12	0	0	0	0
Just girls	2	0	0	2	0	0
None	1	3	6	0	0	0
Females						
Both sexes	59	53	50	54	56	52
Either, don't mind	28	29	40	41	39	41
Just boys	6	4	5	3	0	4
Just girls	6	10	5	3	0	4
None	1	4	0	0	6	0
Number of males	389	69	17	42	5	5
Number of females	641	100	20	39	18	27

Table 46 Respondents, with a partner at present, who felt some pressure to have children

	Birthplace					
Source of pressure	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
On males						
Parents	29%	30%	24%	31%	60%	0%
Friends	14	9	12	19	40	40
Partner	31	26	27	45	40	40
Relatives	19	13	18	17	40	40
Self	24	28	41	38	40	40
On females						
Parents	18	15	20	16	22	41
Friends	15	14	10	8	11	26
Partner	15	15	25	15	22	22
Relatives	18	19	15	13	28	26
Self	35	31	30	41	44	44
Number of males	389	69	17	42	5	5
Number of females	641	100	20	39	18	27

Many men felt it was important to delay child bearing until they and their partners could cope with the additional responsibilities, until their marriage had settled and until they had saved enough money. Women who were born in Australia and the other English-speaking countries were more ready to delay child bearing than those from non-English-speaking countries, particularly Southern Europe, the Middle East and South-East Asia (Table 47). In his study of Greek and Italian parents, Callan (1980: 14) also found that the Southern European wives were more likely to want to have a child in the initial years of marriage than Australian wives. Thus, even though more Southern European and Middle Eastern male respondents compared with the Australian-born indicated that they would delay having children for a number of the reasons suggested, it is possible that they might not if their wives were 'ready to cope'.

The various birthplace groups differed from one another regarding reasons for having children. Callan (1980: 14) reported that 'there was immense social importance in having a child in the Southern European community': having children was perceived as a fulfilment of the marriage and established the couple in the community. Such sentiments were also indicated by the AFF Project survey data. Southern European and Middle Eastern respondents felt that having children was an important part of marriage and they more frequently expressed a liking for children — 'kids make life more fun'. Few respondents in this group mentioned that having children affected their social life or the family finances, or resulted in the loss of freedom; none regarded children as 'demanding'. When asked to list some of the bad effects of having children, the Southern European and Middle Eastern respondents were more likely to mention their worries about their children's well-being and future (Tables 48 and 48a).

Western and Eastern Europeans also appeared to enjoy children. Many men mentioned their pride in creating their own family and rearing children, while women tended to stress the satisfaction and love they derived from their children. Many men from English-speaking

Table 47 Respondents, with a partner at present, who would or did delay having children according to reasons

	Birthplace					
Reasons	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Males did/would delay until						
Had enough money	46%	44%	18%	38%	40%	100%
Had a steady job	37	36	29	41	60	80
Partner had job	3	7	6	5	40	40
Could cope	43	45	47	57	80	40
Partner could cope	44	52	59	57	80	60
Had a house	37	36	18	41	60	80
Marriage established	44	44	41	45	40	80
Females did/would delay until						
Had enough money	34	28	30	28	28	26
Had steady job	7	5	0	8	11	4
Partner had job	28	24	15	21	17	19
Could cope	38	45	30	33	33	41
Partner could cope	36	38	25	23	22	37
Had a house	31	33	35	26	28	19
Marriage established	43	40	30	33	22	44
Number of males	389	69	17	42	5	5
Number of females	641	100	20	39	18	27

countries also enjoyed watching their children grow up and teaching them, while women valued the togetherness of a family. However, unlike the Southern Europeans, they were more likely to note that children were demanding in several respects, that they affected their parents' social life and finances, and meant many sleepless nights and some loss of freedom.

There were only four male respondents from South-East Asia with children, thus making it difficult to form any reliable conclusions about their perceptions of having children. Many of the women regarded having children as part of marriage and the natural sequence of events. Nonetheless, many thought that children made life enjoyable and made them more responsible. Like the Southern European and Middle Eastern women, the South-East Asian women considered the disadvantages of child rearing to be the worries about their well-being and future rather than the demands they made.

Child care

The survey also collected information from all respondents who had at least one child under age 12 on their child care arrangements when they went to work or out for entertainment. However, the number of cases involved was quite small especially among the foreign-born respondents. Therefore, the results may not be very reliable.

Table 48 Advantages/disadvantages of having children most frequently mentioned by males

	Birthplace						
Advantages/ disadvantages	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*	*All*
Watch grow up, teach	30%	28%	40%	17%	0%	0%	28%
Makes me more responsible	20	4	30	13	0	9	20
Satisfaction, love	20	9	20	17	0	0	18
Makes life fun	16	17	30	39	0	19	18
Gives meaning to life	11	11	0	22	25	45	13
Form family	10	15	40	26	25	27	13
Togetherness	13	9	10	9	25	18	13
Do things together	10	13	10	22	0	0	11
Someone to work for	8	17	10	13	25	18	10
Fulfilment	11	9	10	4	0	0	10
Affects social life	19	22	20	4	0	9	18
Affects finances	15	11	20	0	0	9	13
Sleepless nights	15	13	0	9	0	0	13
Loss of freedom	13	9	10	0	0	0	11
Worries	7	7	20	9	0	9	7
Future fears	6	7	10	13	0	0	6
Discipline problems	6	7	10	13	0	0	6
Demanding	5	7	20	0	0	0	5
Less time, privacy	6	4	0	0	0	0	5
Affects marriage	4	7	10	0	25	0	4
Number	256	46	10	23	4	11	350

Most male respondents indicated that their wives minded the children when they went to work. One-third of the female respondents with a child under age 12 were working. Their most common arrangement was to leave the child or children with relatives. Many women relied on more than one arrangement, usually on relatives in combination with neighbours, baby-sitters and friends. 'Other' arrangements also included school (16 women), friends (eight), taking their children along to work (four) and working at home (two). There was not much difference between Australian-born women and women from the non-English-speaking countries as regards leaving children with relatives, but the proportion of women born in English-speaking countries who were able to leave children with relatives was a little lower. A greater proportion of respondents from the non-English-speaking countries than from Australia or the other English-speaking countries left their children with neighbours or at a day care centre (Table 49).

There was not much difference in the child care arrangements made by male and female respondents when they went out for entertainment so the responses of both sexes have been combined to increase the cell sizes for the foreign-born categories. Relatives were most frequently called on to baby-sit when the parents went out. Again, many respondents relied on some combination of relatives, neighbours, baby-sitters and friends. Common 'other'

Table 48a Advantages/disadvantages of having children most frequently mentioned by females

Advantages/ disadvantages	*Birthplace*						
	Australia	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*	**All**
Satisfaction, love	24%	12%	24%	29%	11%	8%	**24%**
Makes life fun	19	22	19	36	50	25	**21**
Watch grow up, teach	20	19	24	25	11	13	**20**
Togetherness	17	27	24	29	11	13	**18**
Form family	16	15	24	25	11	17	**16**
Makes me more responsible	15	9	19	0	22	17	**14**
Changes marriage positively	14	13	19	7	0	17	**13**
Meaning to life	12	7	10	11	0	13	**11**
Less lonely	11	12	14	4	0	13	**11**
Makes me complete woman	10	8	10	11	6	4	**10**
Affects social life	13	24	5	4	6	4	**13**
Loss of freedom	12	23	10	7	6	8	**13**
Affects finances	11	16	0	4	6	17	**11**
Future fears	9	8	14	14	11	13	**10**
Discipline problems	8	8	14	0	6	0	**8**
Sleepless nights	8	4	14	0	11	8	**8**
Less time, privacy	9	6	0	4	0	0	**7**
Worries	5	5	0	29	17	21	**7**
Demanding	7	5	5	0	6	0	**7**
Lose self-control	5	7	0	4	0	0	**5**

arrangements were to take the children along, or to use friends or a baby-sitting club. Fewer respondents from the English-speaking countries and South-East Asia than from the other groups were able to rely solely on relatives. More of those born in the English-speaking countries asked neighbours or had baby-sitters instead. The South-East Asians were more likely than the other groups to leave the children with one spouse or with a neighbour (Table 49a).

Since children were mainly cared for by the spouse or relatives when a parent worked or went out, only about one-quarter of the respondents who mentioned any child care arrangements paid for the service; the average weekly cost was higher for respondents from non-English-speaking countries and lowest for those from English-speaking countries. However, the results might be biased by the small sample size (Table 50). This topic needs further study with a larger sample.

Table 49 Child care arrangements of respondents with a child under 12 while at work

Child care arrangement	Birthplace: Australia	Other English-speaking countries	Western and Eastern Europe	Southern Europe, Middle East	South-East Asia, China	Elsewhere	All
Of working males							
Spouse	137	21	5	19	2	1	185
Older children	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Relatives	15	3	0	2	0	0	20
Neighbour	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Baby-sitter	7	0	0	1	0	2	10
Creche, pre-school, etc	7	4	1	0	0	0	12
Other*	12	3	1	3	0	0	19
Not stated	1	2	0	1	0	0	4
Total	180	35	7	26	2	3	253
Of working females							
Spouse	34	7	1	3	1	0	46
Older children	5	2	0	0	0	0	7
Relatives	53	6	1	4	1	3	68
Neighbour	7	2	1	0	2	2	14
Baby-sitter	21	0	0	2	0	2	25
Leave at home	1	0	1	1	0	0	3
Creche, pre-school, etc	16	3	0	2	1	2	24
Other*	50	9	2	0	0	1	62
Not stated	13	1	0	1	1	0	16
Total	200	30	6	13	6	10	265
Per cent working	34%	31%	27%	38%	33%	56%	34%

Note: * refers to a combination of arrangements. The most common combinations involved relatives, neighbours, baby-sitters and friends. Sixteen respondents had children who were in school and could take care of themselves; four said they took the child with them to work, and two worked at home.

Table 49a Child care arrangements of respondents with a child under 12 when going out

Child care arrangement	Birthplace: Australia	Other English-speaking countries	Western and Eastern Europe	Southern Europe, Middle East	South-East Asia, China	Elsewhere	All
Spouse	17	4	0	4	2	0	27
Older children	18	5	0	0	0	0	23
Relatives	393	39	18	31	5	10	496
Neighbour	56	15	1	2	2	1	77
Baby-sitter	93	31	5	3	1	4	137
Leave at home	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
Creche, pre-school, etc	3	1	0	0	0	0	4
Other*	151	22	5	12	4	2	196
Not stated	15	3	1	4	0	0	23
Total	748	121	30	56	14	17	986

Note: * refers to a combination of arrangements. The most commonly mentioned (by 70 respondents) was the combination of relatives and neighbours or baby-sitter. Twenty-two said they usually took the children along; 28 left the children with friends; and 11 used baby-sitting clubs.

Table 50 Cost of paid child care per week to respondents

	Cost per week				
	< $10	*$10-19*	*$20-29*	*$30 or more*	*Average*
Birthplace, number of respondents	*Number who paid*				
Australia (156)	65	42	18	31	$16
Other English-speaking countries (36)	17	11	4	4	$12
Western and Eastern Europe (6)	1	2	2	1	$18
Southern Europe, Middle East (5)	0	2	1	2	$26
South-East Asia, China (4)	0	1	3	0	$18
Elsewhere (8)	1	2	0	5	$27

8 Respondents' General Attitudes

An attempt was made to elicit some general attitudes from the AFF Project survey respondents. They were asked about their concept of the male and female roles, the major pressures they were experiencing in their lives and their views of the future.

Attitudes to sex roles

Respondents' attitudes to sex roles could be ascertained from their agreement or disagreement with eight statements about male and female roles (Table 51). Respondents from Southern Europe, the Middle East and South-East Asia could be classified as more traditional in their sex role attitudes than respondents from the other categories. They were more likely to agree that the motherhood role was the most important one for women and that important decisions should be made by the husband. Only 62 per cent of female respondents from Southern Europe and the Middle East agreed that husbands should help with housework compared with 76 per cent of women from South-East Asia and Western and Eastern Europe, and 82 per cent of women born in Australia and the other English-speaking countries.

Major life pressures

When asked what was the major pressure they faced in life at this stage, about 13 per cent of the respondents could not think of any. Twenty-five per cent of men from Southern Europe, the Middle East and South-East Asia and nearly 20 per cent of the Southern European/Middle Eastern females, compared with 10 per cent of Australian-born respondents, felt no major pressures. It is possible, of course, that they could be more reluctant to reveal any pressures on them (Table 52).

The majority of people in all ethnic categories, except the South-East Asians, who said they faced major pressures mentioned money. Next, for males, were pressures related to work and career, home mortgages and the cost of living. Four of the 18 South-East Asian males felt that getting ahead in their career was the major pressure. Many of the female respondents also mentioned the cost of living as a major pressure but fewer mentioned pressures related to work and career. Instead, a number of women (81 out of 1274) born in Australia and the other English-speaking countries said that being a good parent was their major pressure, but this was a pressure for only four out of the 152 female respondents from the non-English-speaking countries. Many of the foreign-born men and women, but relatively few of the Australian-born, said that finding work was the major pressure they faced at this stage of their lives. Five of the South-East Asians said their major pressure was completing their education.

Table 51 Respondents' agreement with statements about sex roles

	Birthplace					
Statement	*Australia*	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Males						
'Husband should make important decisions'	21%	22%	31%	55%	44%	35%
'A woman is only fulfilled as a mother'	21	13	22	47	44	20
'Whatever a woman's career, her most important role in life is still that of mother'	45	33	44	73	73	55
'Wives who don't have to shouldn't work'	57	56	69	69	61	75
'Husband provides protection for wife'	91	89	88	95	100	95
'Husbands should help regularly with housework'	85	89	91	72	89	90
Females						
'Husband should make important decisions'	13	9	21	25	45	24
'A woman is only fulfilled as a mother'	25	18	38	53	52	21
'Whatever a woman's career, her most important role is still that of mother'	43	28	48	70	72	41
'Wives who don't have to shouldn't work	52	39	52	62	55	61
'Husband provides protection for wife'	79	72	69	88	72	71
'Husbands should help regularly with housework'	82	82	76	62	76	82
Number of males	857	127	32	64	18	20
Number of females	1 122	152	29	60	29	34

Attitude to the future

Many respondents felt that things would either be the same in two years' time or that they would be better. Very few expressed pessimism about the future. Both men and women, native-born and foreign-born, said that they might be in a better financial situation, working, or married and living in their own home, or expecting their first child.

Table 52 Major pressures respondents faced in life at this stage

	Birthplace					
	Australia	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Pressure	*(Order of ranking)*					
Males						
Money	1	1	1	1		1
Career	2	4		2	1	2
Work	3	2	2	1	2	
Housing debt	4	3	2	3		2
Cost of living	5	4	3			
Finding work			3	2	2	3
Completing education					2	
Saving						2
Female						
Money	1	1	2	1	2	1
Cost of living	2	2	1	2	1	
Being good parent	3	4				
Finding work		3	5	2	2	
Study for exams	4					
Housing debt			3	3		1
Work	5					2
Children's welfare		5				
Health				3	2	
Completing education					1	
Pregnancy — 1st child						2
Career						2
Interest rates debts			4			
Percentage of respondents saying no pressures						
Males	10	10	19	22	28	15
Females	14	9	10	19	14	2

9 Discussion

The marriage and child-bearing patterns and attitudes to family formation of the men and women from the various ethnic backgrounds differed from one another and from the Australian-born population in many ways.

Differences between the groups

Most of the differences observed in this report were between the Southern European, Middle Eastern and South-East Asian respondents and the Australian-born, English-speaking and Western and Eastern European respondents. The Southern European, Middle Eastern and South-East Asian men and women were more traditional in their attitudes to living together and sex roles than the Australian-born and other English-speaking people. They were also more family oriented. They were more likely to do things with their families during the early teenage years and to leave home a little later, usually at the time of marriage.

On average the Southern European and Middle Eastern women were married at younger ages than Australian-born women but their marriages, like those of the men from the same region, were more stable. They were the most likely of all the respondents to agree that marriage provided love, warmth and happiness, a sense of responsibility, and the opportunity to have and bring up children. Many respondents felt it was important that their parents approve of their partner; not surprisingly many had partners from the same ethnic group and many in fact met their partners through parents, relatives and friends.

The family was regarded as an important social institution. Children were much valued and were considered an important part of marriage. However, Southern European/Middle Eastern women wanted slightly smaller families on average than the Australian-born respondents. Ware (1975: 376) has suggested that differences in fertility behaviour between the Southern Europeans and the native-born Australians can be explained by differences in socio-economic status. That hypothesis remains to be tested by further analysis of the data. These preliminary findings indicate that in spite of the social importance Southern European/Middle Eastern respondents attach to having children, concern for their children's future could be the motivating factor in their desire for a small family. It has been suggested that as migrants, they are likely to be relatively more achievement oriented than the native-born (Ware, 1975: 377). Many of them probably want their children to be successful in their new country and the best way is to have few children and give them the best upbringing they can afford. An earlier study has shown that Greek women would like at least a son to attend university (Callan, 1980: 33).

The other group which differed significantly in its family formation patterns from the Australian-born was the South-East Asian and Chinese. The respondents in this category married much later and on average wanted smaller families. Two-thirds of the married women wanted two children; only one in ten wanted to have three or more. They also appeared achievement oriented and many had tertiary education. This factor could be related to their age at marriage and lower fertility. But even those who did not have tertiary education wanted small families.

Like the Southern European/Middle Eastern respondents, many South-East Asian respondents felt that parental approval of their partner was important and many had partners of the same ethnic background. However, more of them came to Australia after the age of 15 and therefore could have been married before their arrival in this country. Religion was less important to them than to the Southern European and Middle Eastern men and women.

It would have been preferable to have differentiated the Indo-Chinese from the rest of the Asians in this group because the Indo-Chinese came to this country as refugees while the other Asians came for further education and other socio-economic reasons. Their attitudes to many of the issues addressed by the survey could be the same as those of the other Asians and yet some aspects of their family formation behaviour could of necessity be different. It is hoped that future studies will address these two groups separately.

Men and women born in the other English-speaking countries were not very different from the Australian-born in their attitudes to marriage and child bearing. However, they were married at slightly younger ages than the Australian-born and the incidence of marital breakdown also appeared to be higher among them. Married women began child bearing earlier than Australian-born women but wanted slightly smaller families.

Men and women from Western and Eastern Europe were closer to the English-speaking and Australian-born respondents in their attitudes to marriage and child bearing and their marriage patterns than they were to the Southern Europeans. Male respondents in this group were also more likely than those in the other foreign-born categories to have an Australian-born partner. Married female respondents in this group also wanted smaller families than the Australian-born and other English-speaking respondents; four out of the 20 (20 per cent) wanted or expected to have only one child.

It is possible that the combination of people from so many national origins into a European category might have caused differences between a particular people and native-born Australians to balance out. For example, data from earlier censuses had indicated that German-born wives had lower fertility than Australian-born wives, but that the Dutch had higher fertility (Ruzicka and Caldwell, 1982). The combination of these two groups into a European category would result in that category having similar fertility to the Australian-born. However, their small numbers made such a regrouping necessary. It would also have been preferable to consider Eastern Europeans as a separate category since many came as refugees and their family formation patterns might be different from those of the Western Europeans.

It is difficult to form any conclusions about the 'elsewhere' category because it consisted of very small numbers of very diverse people. Collectively, respondents in this group formed only 1.7 per cent of the Australian population in 1981. Thus, it would be difficult to include many of them in any survey.

Similarities between the groups

It is equally important to note similarities between the foreign-born and native-born Australians. For example, the most recent Census data showed that the proportions of men and women aged 20-24 who had married were the same for those born in Indo-China and Australia. Men and women from the various ethnic backgrounds also largely agreed about the attributes in a partner which were important; for example, they agreed that partners should share goals and ideas.

Only the marriages of the Southern European/Middle Eastern respondents stood out in their stability. The South-East Asians and Western and Eastern Europeans held a number of views similar to those of the Australian-born and English-speaking respondents about the advantages and disadvantages of marriage and probably experienced comparable rates of marital dissolution. Further analyses of larger samples would be necessary to establish this.

Young women from all birthplace groups were agreed in wanting a small family. The two-child family appeared to be the norm for women in all the birthplace groups. About half of all European and English-speaking respondents and two-thirds of the Asians and others wanted to have two children. The average desired family size of the Australian-born women was 2.5 compared with 2.4 for the Southern European and Middle Eastern women and 2.2 for Western and Eastern European women. The Asians, coming from a tradition of high fertility, wanted an even smaller family of not more than two children.

These findings indicate that while some members of the foreign-born population in Australia have retained the social and religious values of their societies of origin, which have influenced aspects of their marriage patterns, they have also adapted in a pragmatic way to the fertility behaviour of this country. Additional research which followed up these respondents and their demographic behaviour in their later child-bearing years, and compared them with Australian-born persons of migrant parents from the same ethnic backgrounds, would provide further understanding of the family formation and dissolution patterns of the different ethnic groups.

10 Recommendations

Further analysis of the AFF Project survey data

Because of time constraints, it was not possible to examine each topic in depth or to test particular hypotheses about family formation among different ethnic groups. Several directions for further analysis are possible.

1 It would be of interest to examine people born in Australia of non-English-speaking parents and compare them with the foreign-born and the Australian-born of Australian parents. There were 168 Australian-born respondents with non-English-speaking parents, most of whom were from Europe.
2 Further comparisons could be made between the foreign-born who came to Australia before the age of 15 and those who came after. Although this report makes this distinction in the examination of a few topics, it was not possible to carry out the comparison consistently throughout the analysis because of the time limitation. It would be of interest to compare the attitudes to family formation of the foreign-born according to their length of residence in this country.
3 Further analysis of fertility behaviour and differentials could help answer some specific questions such as the extent to which socio-economic status affects the fertility of the foreign-born compared with that of the native-born Australians. Other questions which could be examined are whether the size of the respondents' family of origin is related to their own desired family size and whether this holds for all ethnic groups.
4 It might be useful also to examine a few case studies from some of the ethnic groups in depth. It would then be possible to link family background, family formation behaviour and attitudes to obtain a more complete picture of individuals and their adaptation to the social and economic conditions of this country.

Questions for future surveys

This analysis has pointed out several issues which could be addressed in future research based on larger samples of the foreign-born.

1 Marital breakdown and its consequences: there were too few cases of separated and divorced persons among the foreign-born in this sample for an adequate analysis of their characteristics and their experiences of marital breakdown. A larger sample but one which also includes the older ages (up to age 45, for example) would be helpful for such a study.

2 Child care: there were too few foreign-born women with young children in this survey sample for a useful study of child care arrangements and costs. Future examination of this topic needs a much larger sample.
3 It would be very useful to follow up the foreign-born respondents in this sample as they pass through their child-bearing years to see how closely their family formation behaviour conforms to their plans and intentions as indicated in 1981-82, and how they have settled into this country.
4 In fairness to the different ethnic groups resident in Australia, each should be examined individually instead of being organised into broad regional categories as is the case here. Future survey questionnaires should allow for more specific birthplace codes; for example, Indo-China and the rest of South-East Asia should be coded separately. People put into the same birthplace groups in this enquiry came to Australia under different circumstances: some came as refugees, others came for economic reasons, still others came to join family members. It is, therefore, all the more important to consider them separately in analysing their family formation patterns.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Language problems with the survey

As expected, respondents from Southern Europe, the Middle East and South-East Asia were more likely than the others to have problems with the English vocabulary used in the AFF Project survey. About one-third of the men from these regions and 45 per cent of the South-East Asian women had problems with vocabulary. The female respondents from Southern Europe and the Middle East were apparently better at English than the male respondents; only 27 per cent had language problems (Table 53).

The fact that some of the non-English-speaking respondents did have problems with words used in the survey raises the question of how reliable their responses were, especially those to the attitude questions. It is unlikely that questions requesting factual information would be misunderstood. However, some of the statements measuring attitudes could be misinterpreted. Therefore, assessment of attitudes to various issues was made not by examining

Table 53 Interviewers' ratings of the language problems and the interview

	Birthplace					
	Australia	*Other English-speaking countries*	*Western and Eastern Europe*	*Southern Europe, Middle East*	*South-East Asia, China*	*Elsewhere*
Language problems						
Males:						
No problems	98%	96%	81%	63%	56%	85%
Small vocabulary	2	3	13	36	39	15
Females:						
No problems	98	97	93	72	52	85
Small vocabulary	2	3	7	27	45	15
Agreeable to follow-up interview						
Males	97	97	97	94	94	100
Females	96	95	97	92	83	94
*Comfortable during interview**						
Males	2.2	2.1	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.2
Females	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.0

* Average score from 1 (comfortable) to 5 (uncomfortable).

people's responses to single statements, but by examining their responses to several statements on each issue to obtain a general view. During the analysis, consistency of patterns were checked where possible before any conclusions were drawn. The attitudes of the different birthplace groups to the various family formation issues appear to be internally consistent and in accordance with related behavioural patterns. The language problem might alter the attitude findings by a few percentage points for some birthplace groups but it is not serious enough to affect the major conclusions of this report. A more serious factor which could affect the findings is the small number of cases available for some of the tabulations.

Appendix 2: The interview

The AFF Project survey interviewers were asked to rate the respondents on a scale of one (most comfortable) to five (uncomfortable) according to how comfortable they appeared during the interview. Most respondents seemed comfortable during the interview, scoring an average of 2.2. Women were more comfortable than men; their scores were slightly lower than men's (Table 53).

Most respondents were agreeable to a follow-up interview. Only about 5 per cent of the male respondents were unwilling to be interviewed again. Female respondents were a little less willing than male respondents to be interviewed again. This is somewhat surprising since they were rated by the interviewers as more comfortable than males during the interview. About 18 per cent of the South-East Asian female respondents were unwilling to be interviewed again. Since this group also had the largest proportion with language difficulties, it could be that they were unwilling to talk to the interviewers again because they felt embarrassed about their English.

About 80 per cent of the respondents also agreed that 'questionnaires like this get very close to the truth'. Whether this was to please the interviewer is not known. The South-East Asian female respondents appeared more cynical (presuming that they had understood the statement correctly): only 62 per cent felt that such surveys were useful.

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Institute of Family Studies — Original Data Collection

The Institute of Family Studies, established under the provisions of the *Family Law Act* 1975, began operation in 1980 with the aim of developing a comprehensive and detailed understanding of factors affecting family structure and family life in Australia. The policy advisory approach of the Institute stresses the importance of the economic status and well-being of Australian families and positive programs of support for families and the needs of children.

An important part of the Institute's work involves four original data collection projects. Data collected from individual surveys from each of these projects will be analysed and reported on by the Institute. Subsequently, data from selected surveys will also be released for analysis by other researchers.

To date, the four orginal data collection projects are:

- the **Australian Family Formation Project** (**AFF Project**), aimed at discovering how young Australians feel about getting married and having children and what factors influence their decisions for the future;
- the **Family Re-formation Project** (**FRE Project**), designed to examine the reasons why marriages dissolve, how people cope, the legal process of divorce and its economic and social consequences, remarriage and step-parenting;
- the **Children in Families Project** (**CIF Project**), designed to explore how young children and adolescents living with both natural parents, with one parent or in re-formed families view family life, and their active use of family resources in the development of competence;
- the **Family Support Networks Project** (**FSN Project**), aimed at examining the types of support that families offer to their members as well as the types of formal support services they use, and in what circumstances these kinds of support and services are sought.

Australian Family Formation Project

Aims of the Project

The Australian Family Formation Project (AFF Project) is a longitudinal study of a large national sample of 18 to 34 year-old Australians designed to explore the patterns of family formation in families of origin and families of creation.

Because young people today are more likely than people in past generations to leave home earlier and live independently of their family of origin, to delay marriage, to delay having children, and to enter into de facto unions, it is important to examine the reasons for these changes and the consequences of them on family life in Australia.

Changes in the structure of the Australian population and in the variety of family types on which the AFF Project focuses include:

- leaving home patterns
- the increased incidence of delayed marriages and later child bearing
- divorce and remarriage rates
- increased lone parenthood
- declining birth rates
- the occurrence and nature of de facto relationships
- sexual experience
- the impact of sex roles and work arrangements on family patterns
- social values about marriage, divorce, work, individual and community responsibilities.

By giving a comprehensive progressive picture of what young Australians are thinking and doing about family life, their plans for forming families and their social values, the AFF Project provides detailed information on changes occurring in Australian society that have far-reaching policy implications for both immediate and projected social security costs and for social planning.

Description of the Project Surveys

AFF Project — 1981-82 IFS Survey
Members of the survey team: Don Edgar, Helen Glezer, Christine Kilmartin, Peter McDonald, Andrew Prolisko, Don Stewart, Des Storer, Terry Tremayne.

The first stage of the AFF Project was a major, national survey of 2544 Australians aged 18 to 34 years (1118 men and 1426 women). After extensive planning and pilot-testing by the Institute's AFF Project team, the survey went into the field in October 1981.

The survey's interview schedule covered such issues as family background, residential mobility during childhood, stability of parents' marriage, educational, occupational and personal relationship history, family formation plans and experiences, expectations for and of marriage, having children, experience of economic or personal difficulties, and attitudes and values about marriage, divorce, work and social policies.

Each person interviewed was asked to give permission for the Institute to contact them again so that what actually happens to them can be checked against the plans, expectations and values they had at the time of this first survey. A very high response was received, and contact with respondents is being maintained.

Selected on a probability sample design, the respondents came from randomly chosen households in 650 Collectors' Districts (CD) scattered throughout Australia. These Census areas containing roughly 300 households were stratified to ensure that each State, and each region within each State, was represented in direct proportion to the number of households contained within it. A skip interval of three occupied dwellings was adopted using random start points within each CD. At least three call-backs at the selected households were required to obtain an interview with a person randomly selected from among those aged 18 to 34 within that household.

Approximately 15 household contacts were made in each CD to yield four completed interviews. Thus a total of 9750 households were contacted. Whoever opened the door at each house call was asked first for details about the people living there and their relationships to one another. This information provides a more exhaustive set of relationships than

does the Census and so gives a first complete national picture of the frequency of intact two-parent households, one-parent households and re-formed families, of the numbers of adopted, step and 'half' children, and of the number of households containing extended or multiple families, group living arrangements and couples 'living together as married' (de facto). These findings about household structure patterns include families right across the age range. Then, in all households where there was at least one person aged between 18 and 34 years a detailed interview was obtained with one person in that age range.

Logistically, this exercise required training of 120 interviewers across Australia and field supervision of their work. Completed interview schedules were returned to Melbourne and Reark Research Pty Ltd coded and punched the data from item responses onto computer tape. The entire exercise took from October 1981 until the end of March 1982. Since then, the Institute has been checking the data, coding the more complex open-ended questionnaire items and analysing the data.

AFF Project — 1986 IFS Survey

It is intended to follow up the 1981 national sample in order to examine family formation changes which have occurred since the first interview. By 1986, 18 year-olds in the original sample will be 23 to 24 and the 1986 Survey will look at their changed economic circumstances, attitudes to marriage, relationships formed, reality versus earlier expectations and future plans.

Contracted research

In addition to research conducted by the staff of the Institute of Family Studies, additional research has been contracted to researchers external to the Institute.

AFF Project — 1982 Marriage Case Studies

This set of case studies of 60 young married people from the national sample of 2544 gives a picture of how couples negotiate their roles in newly formed families and the main factors affecting family functioning and marital satisfaction. The researchers are Helen Glezer and Tamara Kotler.

AFF Project Publications

To date, publications based on AFF Project data include:

'The transition to marriage: trends in age at first marriage and proportions marrying in Australia', by Gordon Carmichael, in *Proceedings Volume I, Family Formation, Structure, Values*, Australian Family Research Conference, Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 1984. (Price: $8.00, or $50.00 full set 7 vols.)

'Changes in marriage and sex-role attitudes among young married women: 1971-1982', by Helen Glezer, in *Proceedings Volume I, Family Formation, Structure, Values*, Australian Family Research Conference, Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 1984. (Price: $8.00, or $50.00 full set 7 vols.)

'Family formation and ethnicity', by Siew-Ean Khoo, in *Proceedings Volume I, Family Formation, Structure, Values*, Australian Family Research Conference, Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 1984. (Price: $8.00, or $50.00 full set 7 vols.)

Family formation and ethnicity, by Siew-Ean Khoo, Working Paper No. 9, Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, March 1985. (Price: $5.00)

Living together: young couples in informal marriages, by Siew-Ean Khoo, Working Paper No. 10, Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, July 1985. (Price: $5.00)

Institute of Family Studies *Annual Report 1982-83*, Chapter 1. (Price: $6.50)

Can the family survive?, by Peter McDonald, Discussion Paper No. 11, Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 1984. (Price $1.50)

Further publications based on AFF Project data are being prepared by the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

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